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WHOSE WIFE?

[WHAT FOOLS THESE MORTALS BE.—*Puck.*]

A DRAMA

BY

FRANKLIN P. NORTON

Author of Six Dramas of American Romance and History

THE SECRETARY OF STATE

FINANCIER OF NEW YORK

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, OR THE REBELLION

OTOMIS, THE INDIAN OF MEXICO

THE THIRD TERM

KING OF WALL STREET

and of

MACHIAVELLI

THE LADY OF THE SWAMP

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WHOSE WIFE?

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

EDMUND WALLER, one of Belinda's beaux, and afterwards her Husband.
PHILIP, his Rival and afterwards Husband to his Widow.
REGINALD, ARTHUR, WALTER, HUBERT, RAYMOND, CLARENCE, ROBERT, — *Young Men who are beaux of Belinda's Girl Friends.*
RICHARD, a Hunchback
JUDGE SHIPMAN, Father to Belinda.
GRANDPA SHIPMAN, his Father.
Two Old Cronies of Grandpa.
THE MELANCHOLY JAQUES, Friend to the Judge.
Pastor of Poor People's Church.
The Children of his Sunday School.
HOMER, Husband to Virginia.
MR. & MRS. MALLORY, MR. & MRS. TAPPEN, MR. & MRS. HARRIS, MR. & MRS. OGLE, MR. & MRS. GADABOUT, MR. & MRS. PEKOK, MR. & MRS. FIRESTONE, — *Married couples who are guests at Tin Wedding and at Marriage Ceremony.*
PASTOR, who marries Philip and Belinda.
BELINDA SHIPMAN, a Belle, and afterwards Wife to EDMUND, and then Wife to PHILIP.
FLORA and FRED, children to Edmund and Belinda.
EMMELINE, in love with Edmund; (Drowned early.)
ESTELLE, HELEN, MARION, ELINOR, CONSTANCE, ADELAIDE, MARGARET, — *Girl Friends of Belinda.*
CAROLINE, an Idealist.
MRS. GOSSIP, a Telltale.
VIRGINIA, Wife to Homer, and afterwards betrothed to Reginald.
MRS. SHEPARD, a Matron.
ANGEL.
SATAN.

Other Guests at Tin-wedding, and at Marriage ceremony, consisting of lovers, and married and single persons of various ages. Also the Guests of Birthday Party in first scene. Attendants, Musicians, etc.

The Hyperboreans (celestials) who appear in "Paradise" scene, of all ages and both sexes (apparently,) including 4 Heralds, Hestia, Arethusa, Clergyman, Romeo, 4 Elders, 4 Matrons, Attendants, and a Musical Quartette. Also the Spirit of Edmund and the Spirits of 5 others that have gravitated there to be purged; and Evil Spirits known as the 12 Temptations who have stolen in to impede the purging.

TIME OF DRAMA—*The Present.*

ACT I.

SCENE: Part 1.—*The Plaza of Judge Shipman's Mansion at Auburn, N. Y.—A few chairs and a table with some books on it, at right-front: a sofa, at left-front: an entrance at left: at the rear, are seven rose-trimmed pillars, surmounted with a cornice of frieze, forming an arch that extends clear across stage from right to left: through the wide openings between the arch's pillars, is seen a background of wooded lawn. The front of mansion, with its spacious portico, stands at right wings, and facing left overlooks plaza.*

(*Discovered*) *Judge* SHIPMAN, *and other adults of both sexes, sitting on Portico: Enter, from Mansion,* BELINDA *and* ESTELLE, *who trip across portico, and onto Plaza.*

ESTELLE.

Belinda, why were you not at the Stuckups' Grand ball?

BELINDA.

I had nothing to wear, Estelle.

ESTELLE.

Nothing to wear! and you a rich man's child;
Living in yonder sumptuous mansion:
The idea seems absurd.

BELINDA.

It's true however:—
Of course dear father can and does give me
A carte blanche in pin-money; but just now,
I can't find dress goods nor parisian styles,
Anywhere near elegant enough to suit
My fastidious taste.

ESTELLE.

But the gorgeous costume
You wear, belies your words.

BELINDA.

Oh, this grenadine,—
I found IT because I was compelled to:—
As you know, this is my nineteenth birthday,
And all of our friends here in sweet Auburn,
Are come, responsive to invitations, to grace
The occasion.

ESTELLE.

Why did you quit your guests?

BELINDA.

To tease the pretty girls:—I slipped away,
(Taking you for company), knowing full well
That when the young gentlemen missed me,
They would follow. And see, here they come!

A lot of YOUNG MEN *run out of the Mansion.*

YOUNG MEN.
Where, O where is Miss Belinda!

BELINDA.
Here, I am!
(YOUNG MEN *join* BELINDA *and* ESTELLE)—
What would you have of me?

REGINALD.
You are our sun!

ARTHUR.
You give us light!

WALTER.
(Blinding us too sometimes!)

HUBERT.
And when you disappear, as you did just now,
All is in darkness!

BELINDA.
O, you arch flatterers.

YOUNG MEN.
Flatterers!—

BELINDA.
Prove that you are not.

RAYMOND.
Belinda,
Your beauty, and the marvelous charm you have,
Bewitches at first sight, all young fellows!

BELINDA.
Thank you every one. I take your compliments,
As a Queen receives homage from her subjects.
(*Aside*) But handsome Philip, stands aloof there,
Scowls, and says nothing. He is jealous.

PHILIP.
If you fellows are through now with this farce,
Let us take a short ramble in the woods.

BELINDA.
Delightful!—Philip, your arm.

PHILIP.
Ever your slave!

(*Exeunt at rear, thru wide openings between arch's pillars,* BELINDA *and* PHILIP *arm in arm, followed by the rest*: ESTELLE *remains*)
A bevy of YOUNG GIRLS *run out of Mansion*

YOUNG GIRLS.
Where, O where, are our beaux!

HELEN.
Look, there they go,
With Belinda: they have deserted us for her.

CAROLINE.
In spite of all their vows!

MARION.
And marked attentions!
(*They join* ESTELLE)

ELINOR.
Estelle, what did they say to her?

ESTELLE.
A whole lot:—
Reginald, Arthur, Walter, Hubert, Raymond,
Plied her with spoken fulsome flattery;
And the rest did likewise by glances.

CONSTANCE.
And you?

ESTELLE.
They utterly ignored me.

ADELAIDE.
But you are engaged.

ESTELLE.
What if I am,—that makes little difference.
I live on admiration! to be deprived of it,
Is like to prove fatal!

MARGARET.
I should say so!
Us girls do not act nor feel much different,
After we are engaged: even if very proud—
At least for a while—of the engagement.

CAROLINE.
Deep-rooted habits are not changed in a trice.

HELEN.
I will wager that Belinda came out here,
Just to get the young fellows to follow.

ESTELLE.
Yes,—she admitted as much to me.

MARION.
Shameful!

CONSTANCE.
Why so?—Belinda is craving for only that,
Which you and I and other girls crave for:
She wants to be supreme in the affections,
Of all the handsome young men.

ELINOR.
Here they come!

ADELAIDE.
Let's ignore them: give them taste of our wrath.
(*Re-enter* YOUNG MEN *thru arch's openings*)

YOUNG MEN.
Hello girls!

YOUNG GIRLS.
Don't you dare to speak to us!

YOUNG MEN.
Why not?

MARGARET.
You had best go back to Belinda.

CLARENCE.
Belinda, indeed! she has deserted us
For Philip.

HELEN.
And you deserted us for her.

ROBERT.
Then the score is even-up.

ADELAIDE.
Yes, we are quits.

YOUNG MEN.

Let's make up!

YOUNG GIRLS.

All right!

(Each Gent selects a Lady (CAROLINE *being left alone) and they form a line, then execute to music that soon comes from mansion's open windows a variety of clever wing-dance steps accompanied by graceful undulations of arms and bodies: when music stops they form a group at front)*

MARION. (*jubilantly*)

O, is not love divine!

EVERYBODY.

O, is not love divine!

CAROLINE. (*sadly*)

I cannot see how it deserves that name:—
There is Emmeline; far the sweetest girl
In our set! she loves Edmund, yet he cares
Nothing for her.

HELEN.

Because she is not pretty.

CAROLINE.

Not in face or form, I admit: but she has
A beautiful mind, and a lovely soul.

EVERYBODY.

Mind and soul,—absurd, ha, ha, ha!

CONSTANCE.

Lovers,
Are rankly averse to these very qualities:
Feeling that they don't enhance but impair,
Their fair charmers' fleshly fascinations,
That they admire so much.

REGINALD.

You should have said,
That lovers never think of them at all.

CAROLINE.

So, this—love—that graybeards call divine,
Has become to us, merely a poison-compound
Of selfishness, sensuality and appetite.

ELINOR.

O, you spiteful thing! prove your contention.

CAROLINE.

We paint and powder our faces.

YOUNG GIRLS.

Of course.

ESTELLE.

But you needn't have given the secret away,
To the young men.

YOUNG MEN.

O, we see it plain enough.

CAROLINE.

We all dress ourselves, and conduct ourselves,
So as to arouse in the opposite sex,
A mad craving for our charms.

MARGARET.

Why shouldn't we?
Even husbands, like their wives to be adored.

CAROLINE.

Good husbands, like their wives to be respected.

EVERYBODY.

Nonsense!

CAROLINE.

Whenever out in company together,
We are full of cravings for the young gents,
That come dangerously near to being lust.
Then, each one of us is eagerly striving,
To make a fascinating impression on them,
Superior to, and at the expense of,
All the other girls present: which passion,
Exercised by older persons, is ambition;
In us, it is naught but appetite.

MARGARET.

These things,
That you speak of, are what make flirtation,
So fascinating, so madly intoxicating!

YOUNG MEN.

They are a part of the game!—

CAROLINE.

Besides,
We are very selfish:—being ever anxious,
Not to give pleasure, but to get pleasure.

ADELAIDE.

Fault-finder! what would you have us do?

CAROLINE.

Why let self be the last thing in your thoughts:
Be chaste, be modest, be noble: and then,
All the young fellows of your acquaintance,
Will be the better for having met you,—
Not the worse.

MARION.

Pshaw, young fellows, indeed!
What have you to say about their vices?

WALTER.

Whew, now boys we are going to get it.

YOUNG MEN.

Yes, good and plenty!

CAROLINE.

In regard to young men;
Why they are more selfish and sensual
And fuller of appetites, than we are.
No doubt that is very largely our fault:
But whether it be or not, we can surely,
Do much to reform them, and elevate
Their ideals.

EVERYBODY.

Ha, ha, so endeth the sermon!

RAYMOND.

Just a word: I deny her slanders against us.

CLARENCE.

It shames me, but I must admit they are true.
Why boys, we are not spiritual minded,
At all; but deucedly carnal minded.
We would none of us stop at the virtue
Of an innocent girl, in our mad search
For pleasure. Besides, we are intemperate:
And we use profane; even obscene language.
In regard to rich apparel, we are almost
As crazy to wear it as the girls are.

YOUNG MEN.

You hit us hard, Clarence; but we deserve it!

(REGINALD *and* HELEN *retire to rear of plaza; they are followed by* ARTHUR *and* MARION, *and by* WALTER *and* ADELAIDE)

ELINOR.

Ah, Reginald, Arthur and Walter have left us;
And they are so handsome.

YOUNG GIRLS.

Isn't it a shame!

HUBERT.

Their partners—Helen, Marion and Adelaide;
Are very beautiful girls.

YOUNG MEN.

Think of our loss!

YOUNG GIRLS.

They are no better looking than we are.

YOUNG MEN.

Neither are the boys handsomer than us.

RAYMOND.

What made them desert us?

CONSTANCE.

Pure selfishness!
They always prefer to be by themselves.
Their feverish desires, are tangled up
In each other, beyond the slightest hope
Of ever having for any one person,
A love worthy of the name.

MARGARET.

But Constance,
You might say that same thing of all of us.

ESTELLE.

See, Helen wears a rose colored satin:
And it makes her prouder and vainer,
Than ever.

CLARENCE.

Tush, you are only envious.

ELINOR.

And Adelaide's flounced sapphire-blue silk,
Is positively shocking!

RAYMOND.

In what respect;
Because it covers her form so scantily?
The rest of you are just as immodest.

ELINOR.

I spoke of its execrable fit; and not
Of the low shoulders:—I doat on them.

ROBERT.

So do I!

YOUNG MEN.

So do we!

CAROLINE.

Marion's lilac velvet,
Is magnificent,—but the skirt is as short,
As those worn by chits of thirteen.

HUBERT.

Caroline,
Condemns all you girls when she says that;
For none of your skirts are any longer.

CONSTANCE.

Mean thing! that's just what she said it for.

MARGARET.

They are worn very short now: yet the style
May change sometime: but most girls idolize
Their ankles, and will always find a way
To display them.

YOUNG MEN.

When they cease displaying them,
Then let us cease to live.

CONSTANCE.

A truce to this:—
I like Walter! and am going back to join
That crowd.

ELINOR.

Wouldn't it be rude?

MARGARET.

No ruder,
Than to stand here and point at them.

(*They all join others at rear; except* ROBERT *and* ELINOR *who remain at front*)

ROBERT.

Your dress is stunning!

ELINOR.

I am glad you like it:
How do you like the transparent sleeves?

ROBERT.

Dandy! if you had an arm like Margaret.

ELINOR.

Robert, how dare you say that!

ROBERT.

Why Elinor,
Your face is livid with green jealousy.

ELINOR.

It is?—Well I hate Margaret! and you too!

Enter RICHARD, *left.*

ROBERT.

Here comes the hunchback, Richard.

ELINOR.

Poor fellow!
In a full-dress suit he looks a scarecrow.

ROBERT.

Why is he a guest at all our functions?

ELINOR.

Because he is the son of a wealthy man;
And our Mammas compel us to invite him.

ROBERT.

Crook'd idiot! he is crazy about beautiful girls.

ELINOR.

See, he goes towards the group. To tease him,
They are running away: he following.
(*Everybody finally gathers together at front*)

RICHARD.

Why do you avoid me?

YOUNG GIRLS.

Because you are a bore.

RICHARD.

Why won't you adore me!

YOUNG GIRLS.

Adore you? Never!

RICHARD.

I am starving for love! and must have it!
O why did nature curse me with ugliness?

CAROLINE.

In order that you might not be a prey,
To the shallowness of present-day beauty.

RICHARD.

Ah, beauty! sets my veins afire, and fills me
With desires! Oh come look at me lovingly,
Some of you, and gratify my wild longings!—
You turn haughtily away. But you must relent:
I will sue to each charmer separately!
(*He does so by pantomime, but is rebuffed*)
O cruel fate! How often before to-day,
Have I made tenderest appeals like these:
But all in vain:—Instead of endearments,
I get scorn.

YOUNG GIRLS.

Of course:—You are not straight.

RICHARD.

No, I am not straight; I am humpbacked:—
And few are wise enough to admire that.
O God! I can never become beautiful!

CAROLINE.

You ARE beautiful, now. Beauty, is divine!
(Like love): and all creation is full of it!
If you have not merely skin-deep beauty,—
Thank your stars! For that is used nowdays,
To arouse lustful desires in the beholder.

RICHARD.

It must be so! for formerly when I saw
Some beauteous thing, I took my friends to it,
That they might share my joy: but these girls,
Bring visions of a Turk's voluptuous paradise!
And hell and envy, when handsome boys are by!
Why call it beauty, when it degrades one so?
No, I CAN'T be straight, OUTSIDE: but I CAN
Be straight, INSIDE,—and I will be! Henceforth
I am no bond slave to your frivolities;
But shall devote myself to worthy deeds.

YOUNG GIRLS.

Ha! Ha!

YOUNG MEN. (merrily)

He rants like Shakespeare's Richard!

RAYMOND.

Come girls, let's leave him alone with Caroline:
They are suited to each other.
(*Exeunt Everybody thru arch's openings.*)

RICHARD.

"Suited to each other"—I wish we were:
For your real beauty, begins to dawn on me!

CAROLINE.

Oh, Richard! (*Exeunt into Mansion*)

(*Enter, from portico onto Plaza,* SHIPMAN *and* JAQUES: *the other occupants of portico rise from chairs and go in Mansion.*)

SHIPMAN.

Well, friend Jaques, from seats on yond portico,
We saw the young lovers flutter to and fro,--
And had to, perforce, overhear their talk.

JAQUES.

And oh such IDLE talk!

SHIPMAN.

Idle talk, say you?
No wonder people call you melancholy Jaques:
You are young, attractive and prosperous,
Yet you scornfully eschew the society
Of the fair sex: preferring to wrap yourself
In a mantle of humorous sadness. Marry, man!
It is a law of nature: not to marry,
Is to be unnatural.

JAQUES.

Some men are born,
To become bachelors;; some become bachelors
By circumstances; others become bachelors
For the kingdom of heaven's sake.

SHIPMAN.

Nonsense!
Don't be bachelor; there's too many charmers.

JAQUES.

Judge Shipman, you are the father of Belinda,
But you won't be offended by my question:
I won't speak of young men, though their faults,
Are as great: my query is about young ladies;
Tell me, I pray you, from whence they sprang;
These giddy creatures, amorous looking glasses;
Wanton and voluptuous sirens; artfully made up;
And dressed from head to foot fantastically;
All the noble qualities, they were born with,
Almost ruined by the follies of the times?

SHIPMAN.

Whence sprang they? Don't ask me; go read
Mr. Darwin's "Origin of Species."

JAQUES.

He says,
Man descended from a monkey. Be this true,
Then the monkey-shines of people to-day,
Show that man is not yet free from habits
Of his ancestors.

SHIPMAN.

Ha, ha, a funny conclusion!

JAQUES. (*reflectively*)

Surely human beings did not use to be,
Like they are to-day.

SHIPMAN.

New species of Beings,
Plants and Animals, have come periodically,
From time immemorial. Early biologists,
Taught that every existing species to-day,
Had its exact prototype in antiquity:
But on observing new types, they were forced
To relinquish that error. Later ones taught
That new species came by "special creation,"
Or the intervention of supernatural power
At various intervals. This fanciful theory,
Was only believed for a short time. Latest ones
Taught that new species came by "evolution."
Darwin, in his famous book Origin of Species,
Confirmed this belief so very learnedly,
As to make it almost universally accepted.
Evolution. means Progress: that is to say,
"Approaching ever nearer to perfection."

JAQUES.

Huzzah,—as clear, as crystal! Go on.

SHIPMAN.

This evolution in all animals and plants,
Progresses by a law called "natural selection."
The word, natural, means fixed by nature;
The word, selection, means preferential choice;
Therefore, natural selection, means "A choosing
Fixed by nature." Although it could hardly
Be called a choosing, for in determining
The numerous and various relations, each,
To the others, and each to other things,
They act by INSTINCT, and not by REASON.
The destiny of MAN, is far sublimer!
Yet he too, during all his animal state,
Is controlled by law of "natural selection,"
The same as other animals, and plants are:
Which only leaves him, when it has made him,
A human being; possessing a moral nature—
The image of his Maker—and having free will,
To make his own unhindered "selection"
Between the marvelous things of good or evil,
Which his exalted evolution has revealed:
And will yet reveal far more glorious things,
Provided that he wisely makes choice of,
That which nature always did choose for him—
The good.

JAQUES.

Judge, you are a fine talker,
And the subject is very fascinating!

SHIPMAN.

Thanks!—
An important corollary to laws concerning
Man, animals and plants, and all things
For that matter, is the inexorable principle
That the "better" live, and the "worser" die:
A law known as the "Survival of the Fittest."

JAQUES.

Yet these girls here, they are not well fitted
For life, in any way, (except that they are
Well-fitted by their parisian costumes),
They seem to disprove such a proposition.

SHIPMAN.

They are only a few.

JAQUES.

But they represent,
The prevailing characteristics of their sex.

SHIPMAN.

The law of the survival of the fittest,
Presupposes continued existence of evil:
But it also presupposes that the world
Is growing better. If the sentimental
And social practices of these young girls,
And the large class you think they represent,
Are not near what they morally ought to be,
(And no inference of fitness is to be drawn
Simply from the fact that they are numerous),
Then these practices will be as short lived,
As weeds.

JAQUES.

But what IS the guage of fitness?

SHIPMAN.

The teachings of the Scriptures.—
So you see that under "natural selection,"
What survives is determined by nature;
But when man reaches the free-will stage,
It is up to him whether he survives or not.

JAQUES.
Do you really think that man descended
From a monkey?

SHIPMAN.
That is questionable.
But we have historical, yea ocular proof,
That most men were once savage and barbarous.
Take for instance the great civilized races,
Of central Europe; they were once barbarians:
Then think of our own American Indians.

JAQUES.
True—
And that of itself proves man's evolution.

SHIPMAN.
Now, another word about these young girls:
They are very sweet, good and true, withal,
Even though they do go to foolish extremes,
In some things:—Don't you think so?

JAQUES.
I do not.
Why should love whose only purpose and scope
Is to unite two persons in holy relations
For life, and to beget worthy offspring,—
Why should it be made what these maidens,
And their sex generally, make it: a bone
Of contention; a firebrand among combustibles;
Arousing envy, jealousy, hatred and lust:
Conducted on the lines of furious rivalry;
Shop-window competition in the display
Of fleshly charms.

SHIPMAN.
There's truth in your words.

JAQUES.
The Apostle Paul says, "Faith, Hope and Love,
But the greatest of these is Love." Love
Is the greatest thing in the world: it is
Boundless, infinite, divine, eternal.
Sexual love, is another love of its own kind:
It results in the beautiful and heavenly
Relationship of marriage between couples:
A concomitant of which, is to obey the law of,
"Increase, multiply and replenish the earth."
It is a kind of love, that burns celestial,
Between the couples themselves: but bestowed
On others, it is contaminated; and besides,
The moral law is violated. I believe that
The rising generation should be taught
These solemn truths.

SHIPMAN.
Jaques, O that the sexes
Might mingle together socially in that
Nobler kind of love! Why even wedlock itself,
Would be brought about far more happily:—
"Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven," 'tis said,
"And all things else shall be added unto you."—
Here comes a hoary-headed deputy of heaven;
The Pastor of Auburn's poor people's Church:
And in his wake a swarm of sweet young children.

Enter a PASTOR, *followed by a number of little children, left.*

1ST CHILD.
Playmates, let's have a game of TAG in pillars!

CHILDREN.
All right! All right!!

2ND CHILD.
Mamie, you be IT first.

MAMIE.
Well, tag me: then look out for yourselves!
He tags Mamie, and she chases others round pillars until she tags a boy; that boy finally tags a girl and so on awhile until a humpbacked boy falls; they help him up, and caress him lovingly.)
(During "game" the below talk occurs, front)

PASTOR.
Judge, it was kind of you to invite children,
To a Picnic in your woods!

SHIPMAN.
Why dear Pastor,
I love children! The marvelous things they do,
And the marvelous way in which they do them,
Their buoyancy, artless ways, musical clatter,
And blissful rapture with life in general,
Make me a far better man.

PASTOR.
Our Lord said,
"Suffer little children, to come unto me,
For of such is the kingdom of heaven."

SHIPMAN.
What think you was meant by that?

PASTOR.
That Souls,
Which rest eternally in that land of bliss,
Are like unto the innocency of little children.

JAQUES.
What is your definition of a soul?

PASTOR.
A soul,
Is a personality in its entirety. Eternal,
And designed by God, to expand, until,
When it enters Heaven—the personality
Is Angelic,—for the Bible says, that
In Heaven, we shall be as the Angels.
If it fails of this expansion, it is due
To either one or all of four causes.

JAQUES.
What are they?

PASTOR.
From parental shortcomings—
From personality itself—from circumstances—
From surroundings.

SHIPMAN.
That sounds very logical.

PASTOR.

"Little children." Mark the use of word little:
That is when they are not near puberty.
When puberty comes, they enter the perils,
On the ocean of life: consisting of many
Sexual suggestions, and possibly wedlock,
With its duties and uncertainties: which
If rightly conceived and discharged, one
Reaches safely the SHINING SHORE:—Alas,
How many souls are lost in these perils.
The survivors, then become children again:
O, blessed is that state of SECOND childhood!

3RD CHILD.

Now, let's play "run around."

CHILDREN.

Yes, run around!

4TH CHILD.

Four of us to each pillar. Select partners.

JAQUES.

See, they have now divided off into fours,
And each four surrounds a separate pillar,
Encircle it hand in hand and now revolve
Very swiftly.

SHIPMAN.

I observed distinctly that
In choosings, none chose the best dressed,
Or the best looking: in their clear sight
Each one seems equally desirable.

JAQUES.

Ah, here comes two Attendants, each bearing
A salver piled with pyramids of rare fruits.

SHIPMAN.

Yes, and candies, too: I told them to watch
For the children's coming.

PASTOR. ...

You are very kind!

(*Attendants bring children to front, and then give to each a collection of goodies.*)

SHIPMAN.

Ah, ah! the sweet things receive the "goodies"
With noisy demonstrations of delight. (*Pause*)
Watch them now, out of pure unselfishness,
Insist on dividing up with each other.

PASTOR.

That is love!

JAQUES.

And its not the kind of love
Which is ever striving to find a person,
Who possesses abundantly, a pseudo quality
Of rich and rare beauty, that can afford
Sensual gratification.

PASTOR. (*crosses*)

Now dear children, what have you to say
To good kind Mr. Shipman there? He it is
To whom you owe hearty thanks, for these
Good things!

CHILDREN. (*cross*)

Thank you, Sir! thank you!

PASTOR.

Now we will go in the woods.

(*Exeunt Pastor and Children thru arch's openings*)

SHIPMAN.

They are regular sunbeams!—Come in, Jaques.

(*Shipman and Jaques go in Mansion.*)

An INTERMISSION, in order to prevent this necessarily long scene from becoming tedious, occurs here by the following method. The curtain falls, with an announcement on it in bold letters, saying—

AN INTERMISSION.

After which the Scene will be resumed.

The orchestra plays a tune.

SCENE: Part II.—*The Plaza of* JUDGE SHIPMAN'S MANSION: *being merely a continuation of Scene* I.

Re-enter BELINDA *and* PHILIP, *thru arch.*

PHILIP.

'Pon honor, Belinda! the enamored swains,
Were not amiss in calling you their sun;
For now that we're unshaded, you stand there,
With neck, arms and dress all ablaze with gems!

BELINDA.

Don't speak of gems; speak of me!

PHILIP.

Didn't you
Wear them to be admired?

BELINDA.

Of course I did.
But I fairly hate them now they ARE admired!
I won't share my supremacy with anything:
I myself, must be all in all.

PHILIP.

But you can't:
You have to MAKE UP with stylish costumes:
Young ladies' glory is like the peacock's,
Largely composed of feathers.

BELINDA.

Philip, you scamp!
Why can't a thing be lovely in itself,
And not by some enhancement? It shames me,
But I will cite your complexion, which is
Very handsome,—yet gets no artificial aid.

PHILIP.

Yes it does.

BELINDA.

What aid?

PHILIP.
Champagne.
BELINDA.
Ha, Ha!
I am forced to laugh; but it is no joke,
For your dissipation is what Dad objects to.
PHILIP.
Why don't you give your governor the slip,
And elope with me?
BELINDA.
Hush! don't make it harder,
To wrestle with that temptation: I waver,
But ambition overcomes passion.
PHILIP.
Please explain?
BELINDA.
Marriage is the only way, a young girl's
Boundless desires, can be at all applied:
But it is narrow; and I decline to be
Slave to its narrowness: I must be a belle,
Even after marriage: and to do this,
Money is essential: your Dad is well off,
But not rich: while Edmund Waller's father
Is rich; and besides he is Papa's choice.
PHILIP.
Edmund Waller,—I hate him!
BELINDA. (*teasing*)
You are jealous.
PHILIP.
I am too sporty to be jealous; but am mad!
For while not anxious for matrimony's yoke:
That is the sole way of obtaining you:
And I am one who devours luscious fruit.—
Not simply admire it.
BELINDA.
Almost, a libertine!
Still, us girls find such men fascinating.
PHILIP.
Ah, here's a fine place for an amorous pair.
(*They sit down on sofa, he takes her hand.*)
Dear—your father is rich enough for both:
And if we married, he might shell out.
BELINDA.
On the contrary, Papa is set against you;
And I dare not disobey his commands.
PHILIP.
Then don't marry at all. Waller is something
Of a snob; and prides himself on his learning:
But he is fine looking. I will wage with him,
A continual rivalry for your affections:—
When one handsome fellow, is anguished by
The caresses of a beauty, to another
Handsome fellow, it is very inspiring:
But it is ludicrous, when some homely mug,
Bellows over his lovely wife's, attachment
For an Adonis.
(*A "honk"—Belinda goes left, and returns.*)
BELINDA.
That is Edmund, now: in his automobile.
PHILIP.
Say? let us do a little mock courting:
To tease him—to make him jealous.
BELINDA.
Agreed! It will be lots of fun! Besides,
He needs punishing for not being punctual,
On my birthday. (*Philip puts arm around her.*)
Enter Edmund, left.
EDMUND.
What the devil is this! Are you so brazen,
That you pose in public in shameful attitude?
PHILIP.
It's none of your affair, Waller.
BELINDA.
Come Philip,
Let's go where it won't offend his sight.
(*Philip and Belinda go in Mansion*)
EDMUND.
Alas, she loves me not! All hope ends here!
Give me the whole world, Belinda being bated,
And I'd smile, if it to ashes were translated!
(*Drops dejectedly on sofa.*)
Enter EMMELINE, *left.*
EMMELINE.
Oh Edmund, I just saw you pass in the car:
You are late to the party, as well as I.
Why so pale,—are you sick?
EDMUND. (*rising*)
Yes, sick of life!
Belinda, scorning me, went in the Mansion,
Escorted by Philip; who had arm around her,
Sitting on the sofa here.
EMMELINE.
Innocently maybe:
What would you think of sweet little children,
Who did not put their arms round each other?
Therefore, it can be done by youths and girls,
Without being improper.
EDMUND.
You're green, Emmeline:
It can be—it ought to be—but it is not.
Even social intercourse between the sexes,
Based upon the instincts of brotherly love,
Is saturated with a maudlin sentimentality,
An excessive and unlicensed sexual impulse,
That invests, glances—expressions—words—
Actions—and thoughts—with an ulterior,
And evil, and purposeful meaning.
EMMELINE.
How sad!

EDMUND.

Such glances actions and so forth I have had
From the fair Belinda; and they filled me
With a fiery ecstasy: but when I saw here,
These very same things bestowed on another,
I felt a mad hatred for Philip and herself:
If the value of anything, is fixed,
By the amount of good that it creates,
Then much of the present-day social morality,
Deserves damnation!

EMMELINE.

All people are not alike.

EDMUND.

But exceptions prove the rule, and you are
One of the exceptions. Why you stand there,
Looking like a lily: lovely, pure, fragrant!
'Tis said, the secret of your charm is A SOUL.

EMMELINE.

Why Edmund, a soul, is the common love-link,
Between God and all His children. But alas,
Many do not develop it.

EDMUND.

And lots of others,
Pollute it with their sinful practices.
Yet by those that look with only sensual eyes,
You are considered homely.

EMMELINE. (*sadly*)

I believe so.

EDMUND.

Sweet girl! why couldn't I be happy with you!
To contemplate your graces brings peaceful joy!
(*He takes her hands awhile; then drops them*)
No, my associations have perverted me;
I too, can't do without these fascinations:
After a fellow has been drinking absinthe,
He is indifferent to delicious grape-juice.

EMMELINE.

Edmund, whatever you may be superficially;
I am sure that you have a noble nature.

(*Re-enter* BELINDA, *from Mansion; on seeing* EMMELINE *she hides behind one of the pillars.*)

EDMUND.

Well, there is nothing else for me to do,
But go home.

EMMELINE.

Oh don't go yet I pray you!
Wait here until I return.

EDMUND.

If you don't tarry.

EMMELINE. (*aside*)

Even though it kill me, I must reconcile them!
(*She goes in Mansion: Belinda comes front*)

BELINDA.

How dare you flirt with Emmeline!

EDMUND.

Absurd,—
You know better.

BELINDA.

Us girls know she doats on you:
And you're not so stupid as not to see it.

EDMUND.

True,—she can't help showing what her shyness
Would fain conceal.

BELINDA.

Does she not seem to you,
Like she does to all of us boys and girls
Who meet her, positively homely?

EDMUND.

— Seem?
Longfellow says: To the soul that SLUMBERS,
Things are not what they SEEM.

BELINDA.

Do our souls slumber?

EDMUND.

Only think what shallow things our lives are.
Then answer your own question.

BELINDA.

You answer it.

EDMUND.

Yes, they slumber: they're in a sensuous trance:
And the rank infection extends to the eyes.
Scripture says "The light of the body is the eye;
therefore if thine eye be evil, thy whole body
shall be full of darkness."

BELINDA.

You talk so well:
You ought have been a lecturer. Well, go on.

EDMUND.

The social degeneracy of young people,
Is shown by their attitude towards beauty.
Think how music, poetry, painting, sculpture,
Elevate the mind: leaving a divine content,
Without a pang,—unless it be a wish
To enjoy them again: but when we see
Human beauty,—enamored and fascinated,
We are filled with an ocean of desires,
That the beauty could never gratify:
We crave to selfishly appropriate it all;
Out of its presence we are disconsolate,
And unsatisfied when together.

BELINDA.

O, horror!
What tortures come to us who take part in
This age's mazy realms of sentiment! But I,
Am beauty's queen; and title to my crown,
Was derived from this very degeneracy.

EDMUND.

Then abdicate your throne; and take a course
Of treatment in spirituality.

BELINDA.

What can it do?

EDMUND.

Listen; (I quote St. Paul: "The works of the FLESH, are manifest, and are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, hatred, envy, vanity, jealousy, injury, drunkenness, revelling, and such like: but the fruits of the SPIRIT, are Reverence, love, joy, peace, usefulness, unselfishness, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, chastity, temperance, patience, purity of heart, etc.

BELINDA.

Beautiful! and no doubt true. But it makes
Me feel guilty: it sets me to reflecting,
And I detest thinking. Where did you hear it?
Why speak of it, you never moralized before?

EDMUND.

I heard the passage in a sermon recently,
And was much impressed: so I looked it up.

BELINDA.

Then you are going to reform, and give
All us giddy creatures the cut?

EDMUND.

No, I havn't the pluck to be a reformer:
Although I know that quick reforms are needed
In these matters. I am like the wine drinker:
Who being fully aware that wine intoxicates,
Yet lacks the resolution to give it up.
You are intoxicating,—but you are beautiful!
And I can't resist you!

BELINDA. (*archly*)

Ah, how about Philip?

EDMUND.

The devil! when you revive that to memory,
There comes to me a numbing, aching misery:
His arm in contact with your waist—O shame!

BELINDA.

That was just to tease you: proposed by Philip,
And assented to by me because you were late:—
How dared you be late on my birthday!

EDMUND.

Auto,
Met with a mishap; had to go back after another.—
And Philip,—then you do not love him?

BELINDA.

Why,
I might not love him—or I might: Why ask?

EDMUND.

Don't you know Belinda that I love you?

BELINDA. (*shyly*)

Philip is fine looking.

EDMUND.

Oh, damn Philip!

BELINDA.

But you are handsome.

EDMUND.

Now! I take your hand.

BELINDA.

I like Philip.

EDMUND.

(*Drops hand*) The deuce you do!

BELINDA.

But I love you!

EDMUND.

Ah!—(*Tries to embrace her*)

BELINDA.

Hold! (*He desists*) I am however not sure,
That I care to marry yet awhile.

EDMUND.

What!!

BELINDA.

My life is a continual round of triumphs;
And triumph does beget vaulting ambition.
Whilst I love you best; I love some of
The others too: and even Mormon women
Cannot marry but one man, so I burn
With a feverish longing, to have some
Prodigy of romance, appear by enchantment,
And wed me: who could fully in himself,
Satisfy all these cravings.

EDMUND.

Most modern-girls,
Have similar feelings during courtship stage:
But they soon settle down; become sensible,
And also happy; when they have been united,
And have to take the thing seriously.

BELINDA.

There's Papa, beckoning you from doorway.

EDMUND.

But how about your answer?

BELINDA.

Impatient youth,
Your return will be time enough for that.
(EDMUND *goes in Mansion*).
What shall I do? Dad wants me to marry him;
Therefore, it seems the proper thing to do.
I've been dreaming of wedlock all my life;
But now that dream is becoming a reality,
I hesitate. Edmund surely is the only one
Among my beaux who could make me even
Think of marriage. Yes, I will accept him!
But I won't lose my proud place in society:
I must still be beauty's Queen, and he at best
Only a Prince consort. But such an event,

As MY betrothal, must be accompanied
By something startlingly melodramatic:
The same as I have read of in novels.
But how can I bring that about? I have it,
I will refuse him at first.

Re-enter EDMUND, *from Mansion.*

BELINDA.

What did Papa want?

EDMUND.

Just to exchange greetings.
Now, Belinda, my love, pray speak the words,
That will allay this ache at my heart!

BELINDA.

Edmund,
Oh how it grieves, to give a loved one pain!
But you will have to forget me: there is
A dark secret in my life.

EDMUND.

Horrible revelation!

(*He stalks away with a make-believe anguish*)

I felt that she might not give in without
A dime-novel love scene: I am glad now,
I came prepared. (*Taps breast significantly*)

BELINDA.

You will get over it in time: you won't do
Anything rash, will you dear?

EDMUND.

Yes, I will:
I'll make way with myself!

BELINDA.

My own true Knight!
After you are gone, I'll wear deep mourning:
I will look bewitching in black.

EDMUND.

Have mercy!
You must relent!

BELINDA.

Alas, that is impossible!

EDMUND. (*tragically*)

Never to be mine, then all indeed is lost;
Farewell to spring, and welcome chilly frost!

(*He draws a penknife and stabs himself*)

BELINDA.

O, what awful act is this, desperate youth!
Hah! there are blood spots soaking through
Your white vest! You reel; you are falling.

EDMUND.

Don't forget to plant flowers on my grave!

(*He falls, and she throws herself on him*)

BELINDA.

O Edmund I know now that I love you!
And will wed you! that is if you don't die!

EDMUND.

My own darling! (*Embraces her*)

BELINDA.

But what
Am I thinking of: you need quick attention:
A shriek will summon help.

EDMUND.

Hush, not a word!
I am not hurt; it was a trick. (*They arise*)

BELINDA.

How dared you!

EDMUND.

Forgive me for resorting to it!
You like romantic situations, and so do I;
Besides, such rich prize is not won easily;
Therefore I put a pouch filled with red paint,
Under my vest, so that if you rejected me,
I could commit mock suicide, by puncturing it
With my penknife.

BELINDA.

How did you ever think of it:
It was real melodrama! and it has ended
So very happily!

EDMUND.

Belinda, my love, my own!
O what bliss! You and I to wed: You and I
To be in the relation of husband and wife,
Forever. That will be heaven, indeed!

(*They embrace*)

BELINDA.

But, if I lose my beauty?

EDMUND.

Never fear that!

BELINDA.

Still, I fear that it is not as enduring,
As the kind which Emmeline possesses.

EDMUND.

Tush.

BELINDA.

Do you really love me, or is it only passion?

EDMUND.

Why do you ask, love? you know I adore you!

BELINDA.

I begin to doubt whether this kind of love,
That we arouse by our fleshly fascinations,
Is a kind of love to be proud of.

EDMUND. (*embracing her*)

Forget it!

Re-enter EMMELINE, *from Mansion; she sees "embrace" and hides behind one of the pillars;* EDMUND & BELINDA *go in Mansion; she emerges.*

EMMELINE.

Failing to find Belinda in the Mansion,
I came to tell Edmund—and saw them embrace!
That means they are engaged: they didn't need
My help to be reconciled. Am I really glad
Of their happiness? Well I ought to be;
They are my friends. Yet there's a sadness
In my heart; an empty void; which is horrid!
But I must bear my cross very patiently;
Till the Lord's purpose in it gets obvious:
Then, the blow is seen a blessing disguised.
The girls say, "Why should one like Emmeline,
Who is homely in face but lovely in virtues,
Fall in love with a handsome face and form?"
I do not love Edmund because of his looks;
But on account of superior inward qualities,
That I have discerned.—Ah me, such is love!

(*Exit thru arch's openings*)

Re-enter Young Men and Girls, consisting now of seven couples, thru arch's openings.

REGINALD.

Let us play a game of selection.

HELEN.

What's that?

REGINALD.

Why, selection is a new game, gotten up
To enable forlorn lovers to have a show-down.
It is the last desperate resort of persons,
Like us, who have long flirted and courted,
With no other results than to aroused
Jealousies, envies, hatreds and heartaches.

EVERYBODY.

Let's play it!

REGINALD.

You will all have to reveal
Your heart's secret.

EVERYBODY.

We are ready to do so.

REGINALD.

And your passion may not be reciprocated.

EVERYBODY.

No matter,—even that is better than doubt.

REGINALD.

We must have trysting places: ah, see there!
Those rose-trimmed pillars might be utilized.

MARION.

No lovelier can be had!

REGINALD.

Then young ladies,
Take your stands: one at the right side of each.

(*A girl takes a place at right of each pillar*)

Now fellows, each of you pick out the girl,
You like the best; and go stand at the left,
Of her pillar.

(*A gent takes a place at left of each pillar;* REGINALD *included*)

REGINALD.

Couples—so near: (and yet perchance so far:)
No barrier between us but a marble bar.
Does this arrangement everybody please:
Or are all hearts apart like the antipodes!—
Us boys have chosen; will the girls accept?
Begin at right, and each girl say—yes or no.

(*Every girl in turn gives an emphatic "no:" each "no" brings a sad "oh" from her gent*)

ARTHUR.

By Jove, fellows here's a deuced rocky go!
We're ALL rejected by a supercilious "no."

HUBERT.

Regy, what's the next step?

REGINALD.

Pause a season,—
The anguish of my soul, has stifled reason!

YOUNG MEN.

Alas we all suffer!

REGINALD.

By the rules of the game,
Every mismated couple, must choose again.
Us boys have shown-down: now girls, do the same.

YOUNG GIRLS.

Not even to gain a beau, can we do that.

REGINALD.

But you pledged yourselves; will you break faith?

YOUNG GIRLS.

NO!—

REGINALD.

Then, each one go stand at the right,
Of pillar of the fellow that she likes best.

(*Each girl goes to right of another pillar*)

'Tis said that true love's course is ever rough:
And of its truth we here have proof enough:
First, the girls with smiles upon their faces,
Awaited their beaux, by rosy pillar places:
But were forsaken for a rival, silk adorned:
(Hell has no fury like a woman scorned.)
Boys, you ignored them; so they came to you:
Survey their charms: then decide what to do.

YOUNG MEN.

Think of our despair, when the others left us!
We have good cause also to create a muss.

REGINALD.

There is one question now, and none other:
As we can't get one girl, shall we take another?
Each fellow will answer—yes or no.

(*The gents give an emphatic "no" in chorus*)

Not a single "yes" but a chorus of "noes!"
No couple mated! But every love disclosed!
The game is ended.

(*Each girl with angry actions and words, backs her partner to front of stage; words below*)

CONSTANCE. (*to her partner*)
How dared you choose another girl but me!

YOUNG GIRLS.
(*Echo, each to her partner, all at once*)
How dared you choose another girl but me!

CONSTANCE. (*to her partner*)
And when I demean myself so far as to come
To you, you scorn me!

YOUNG GIRLS. (*echo*)
And when I demean myself
So far as to come to you, you scorn me!
(*Each gent evades partner, and goes to girl he chose at pillar and with angry actions and words backs her to rear; words below*)

RAYMOND. (*to his partner*)
When I demeaned myself so far as to come
To you, you scorned me!

YOUNG MEN.
(*Echo, each to his partner, all at once*)
When I demeaned myself
So far as to come to you, you scorned me!

RAYMOND. (*to his partner*)
How dared you choose another boy but me!

YOUNG MEN. (*echo*)
How dared you choose another boy but me!
(*Girls group at right, gents at left*)

YOUNG GIRLS. (*all at once*)
Us girls call ourselves friends; but in fact,
We are sneaky mean enemies to each other!

YOUNG MEN. (*all at once*)
Us boys call oureslves friends; but in fact,
We are sneaky mean enemies to each other!

YOUNG GIRLS. (*all at once*)
Think of my LOVE, scorned!

YOUNG MEN. (*all at once*)
Think of my LOVE, scorned!

ADELAIDE.
Girls and boys, don't any of you call it love.

CLARENCE.
What shall we call it then?

ADELAIDE.
Why, what it is:
Wounded pride, hurt vanity, diseased appetite,
Social selfishness!

ELINOR.
I feel like crying!

YOUNG GIRLS. (*echo*)
I feel like crying!

WALTER.
I feel like damning!

YOUNG MEN. (*echo*)
I feel like damning!
(*Girls burst out in tears, boys in moans*)
Re-enter Pastor thru arch's openings.

PASTOR.
Why what's the matter dear girls?

YOUNG GIRLS.
O, Pastor;
We are so—unhappy!

PASTOR.
Unhappy, say you!
But you have everything to make you happy;
WHAT do you lack?

MARGARET.
I will make you a confidant.
We all aim to be seductive and fascinating,
In face and form, and our apparel too:
To attain this object we distort and spoil,
The rich gifts, bounteous nature gave us;
Using artificial aids—the skin beautifier,
The hairdresser, the costumer, the corsetiere.
We become as we think, killingly stunning;
And enter the realms of society, to compete,
For supremacy in adoration and idolatry,
With our whole heart and soul: and all this
Falsity and frivolity, does not gain us
One true heart; but does bring us instead,
Most acute discontent and anguish!

PASTOR.
Poor girls!

YOUNG GIRLS.
O please tell us how to be happy!

PASTOR.
Dear girls!
Happiness comes from within you; and not
From around you. Therefore to be happy,
It is imperative that you should cultivate,
Character and those peerless inner graces
Of mind and soul. I am sure, all of you,
Do possess them in very rich abundance;
But like many others, you don't cultivate;
Even neglect them. You ought to and will,
Seek to become all-around noble girls:
Not selfish, not sensual, no appetites.
To esteem so very much your own beauty,
And its adornment, greviously interferes
With the expansion of your nobler selves.

YOUNG MEN.
They need to have a complete change of heart!

HELEN.
But we never could achieve such a miracle,
Without aid.

PASTOR.
God will help you to do it!
He yearns to have His children perfect.
Now, dear fellows, pardon me for speaking;
But you too must reform: you are vitally
In need of it: not few changes merely, but
Utter transformation.

ROBERT.

Pastor, you are right!
Our lives are far from what they should be:
And some of us, (also some of the girls)
Are church members too. Our experiences
To-day however, topped with your advice,
Have set us to thinking:—We will reform!
Won't we boys?

YOUNG MEN.

Yes, yes, upon our honor!

PASTOR.

Excuse me; I must speak to Judge Shipman,
Before leaving with the children. (*Exit*)

(*While Young Men and Girls come with down cast looks together, to be friends again, several shrieks are distinctly heard*)

REGINALD.

Hah, ear piercing shrieks!

ADELAIDE.

They came from nearby!

Enter, hastily from Mansion, SHIPMAN, PASTOR, JACQUES, EDMUND, BELINDA, CAROLINE, RICHARD, PHILIP, *and men and women guests.*

SHIPMAN.

Who shrieked? Anybody hurt here?

ARTHUR.

Nobody here,
The sounds came from just outside.

SHIPMAN.

Outside, eh.

(*They all gaze off at rear, and then at left*)

EVERYBODY.

Nothing in sight.

SHIPMAN.

I must go and investigate.

EDMUND.

No, Philip and I will do that. Come Philip.

(*Exeunt Edmund and Philip left*)

PASTOR.

The children; I go to see if they are safe.
Ah, here comes their attending Matron, with
The sweet creatures!

(*Enter a Matron, with Children, thru arch*)

MATRON.

Pastor, didn't you hear the shrieking?

PASTOR.

Yes,
And was much concerned about the children.

MATRON.

I knew you would be, so I brought them here.

PASTOR. (*to children*)

Were you scared?

CHILDREN.

Yes, dear Pastor, a little!

MATRON.

Poor children, they had just started to sing
Their "Anthem" when noise interrupted them.

A GUEST.

Oh, let them sing it here.

EVERYBODY.

Yes, by all means!

PASTOR.

Just as you please.
Come children, line up in a double column;
And front diagonally across this corner.

(*He arranges children*)

You hearers, will stand opposite at front.
Now children, when I wave my hand—begin.

(*He signals and the children sing an Anthem*)

EVERYBODY.

Bravo!! Bravo!! (*And other shouts of praise*)

PASTOR.

Matron, I guess we won't go back to woods.
So please take them to their respective homes.

MATRON.

I will do so. Come, dear children.

(*Exeunt Matron and Children, left*)

SHIPMAN.

Why Edmund and Philip have not returned:
Ah, here they come.

(*Re-enter* EDMUND *and* PHILIP, *left*)

EDMUND.

We have nothing to report: no indication
Of anything wrong in that vicinity:
Now we will try the woods.

SHIPMAN.

Yes, please do so.

(*Edmund and Philip start thru arch. but stop*)

PHILIP.

Here comes a woman, with a child in her arms;
And a man, bearing a heavy burden!

Enter a Woman, with a Child in her arms, followed by her Husband, carrying the dead body of Emmeline, concealed by a covering, thru arch.

WOMAN. (*sobbing*)

Poor dear! she was drowned in creek, hard by;
In the saving of the life of our child here!

EVERYBODY.

Drowned, say you! O how very sad!

HUSBAND. (*sadly*)

Our child, enamored of the beauty of
An out-of-reach flower, made a try for it,
And fell in stream. This girl, out-speeding
My wife, jumped in, grabbed our darling one,
And by a mighty effort, reached her into

Her mother's outstretched arms: then alas!
The swift current bore her off her feet:
My wife screamed, and I came to the rescue:
But it was too late,—all my proper efforts
Failed to revive her:— I knew they would,
Because she was stone dead when I took her
Out of the water.

(*Seeing Husband is weary Shipman takes body*)

PASTOR.

A young girl, too!
Her mother liveth, perhaps; and is to be
Heartbroken when she learns of catastrophe!

SHIPMAN.

Let us tenderly bear the body into house.
(*Uncovers her face*) How dost thou look now,
O, most unfortunate girl?--Pale as a lily!--
Horror of horrors! It is Emmeline!

EVERYBODY.

Emmeline!

(*They gather near and view body mournfully*)

CAROLINE.

(*She views face, then embraces, sobbing*)
Yes, this inanimate form, this white face,
Is that of my beloved friend, and companion!

EDMUND.

And yet only an infinitely short time ago,
She stood here talking to me--alive, well!

BELINDA.

(*Embracing her*) My own sweet Emmeline!—
O, I feel so sorrowful!—And scared too;
For death is terrible: just think of having
One's beauty, disfigured forever in such
A shocking manner!

SHIPMAN.

Now, my friends let's go in.
Our party, that began in joy, ends in sorrow:
We know what IS; not what's TO BE to-morrow!

(*Shipman, bearing body, starts; All follow*)

PASTOR.

(*Lingering behind, lifts eyes to heaven*)
O death! all eloquent! you only prove;
What *DUST* we doat on, when we *HUMANS* love!

(*He follows; curtain falls while the procession is entering Mansion.*)

ACT II.

SCENE: Part 1.—*The Parlor of the* WALLER *Mansion at Auburn, N. Y. The furnishings are grand: at rear, are a few steps leading up to a narrow platform, running fully across, which leads to a supposed ballroom on right, and a supposed banquet hall on left. Entrances to parlor, via platform and steps, will be designated as follows: "right" after names of those that enter from ballroom, and "left" from banquet hall. A door at right and a door at left of parlor.*

Enter SHIPMAN *and* JAQUES, *followed by* MRS. GOSSIP, *left.*

SHIPMAN.

Well, Jaques, you confirmed bachelor you,
There are lots of married people here to-night;
So you have a fine opportunity to indulge
In your hobby of inveighing against marriage:
Or at least its present conditions.

JAQUES.

Judge,
Let me tell of a few of the many things,
I have observed. But some one interrupts.

SHIPMAN.

Ah, here comes Mrs. Gossip: no social function
Is complete without HER. I will introduce you.

MRS. GOSSIP.

Mr. Shipman, we just left banquet hall together:
I thought I would follow you here to parlor.

SHIPMAN.

Delighted, I'm sure! Jaques, this is Mrs. Gossip.
(*They bow*).

MRS. GOSSIP.

My name is Gossip, but I am no tattler:
I only tell things that ought to be known.

SHIPMAN.

How are you enjoying Belinda and Edmund's
Tin-wedding anniversary?

MRS. GOSSIP.

Very, very much!
I always do enjoy parties; for I meet
Many people, and have a chance to spy
Into their faults, and tell them to others.
Just think, they have been married ten years:
And have two such sweet children!

SHIPMAN.

Yes indeed!
And Flora, is almost nine now; and Fred,
Over seven.

MRS. GOSSIP.

They were wed, shortly after
Dear Emmeline was drowned.

SHIPMAN.

Six months after.—
Like us, the guests will soon quit banquet hall:
But they love dancing; and won't descend steps,
But keep right on across platform to ballroom.

MRS. GOSSIP.
Yes, there go Mr. and Mrs. Mallory now: she,
You observe is dressed extravagantly: he,
Is only on a salary, and she keeps his nose
To the grindstone.

JAQUES.
Like many other wives.

MRS. GOSSIP.
That pair, is the Tappens: many couples
Are disappointed after marriage; but they,
Particularly so; and it is now rumored
That divorce proceedings are impending.

JAQUES.
Divorce cases are numerous; this isn't strange,
Because so many of the contracting parties,
Are abnormal.—Who's that?

MRS. GOSSIP.
That immodest lady,
Is Mrs. Harris—and her husband: he adores
Her shape; so dare not take her to task,
For displaying it to others.—Now come
Mr. and Mrs. Ogle: scandal even calls him
A cuckold; for Mrs. Ogle flirts shamefully.
Her mother was an awful flirt before her;
And you know the children inherit the sins
Of their parents, even unto the 4th generation.

SHIPMAN.
We know it right well.—Look, this couple
Is waltzing, even on narrow passageway.

MRS. GOSSIP.
That is Mrs. Gadabout: she is a habitue
Of balls and parties; a vicious propensity,
Which she contracted before marriage.
Her partner is one of her many admirers;
She has given Mr. Gadabout the slip.

SHIPMAN.
Ha, ha! Allow me to suggest that the lady,
Has a very appropriate name.

MRS. GOSSIP.
Next comers are
Homer and Virginia: they are a model pair;
Ever true and constant before marriage,
And perfectly devoted ever since marriage.
They are neighbors of Belinda's?

SHIPMAN.
They live
Two doors from here. Your eulogy is right:
Their virtues are on everybody's tongue.
There come the Pekoks.

MRS. GOSSIP.
Name spelt P-e-k-o-k,
Not P-e-a-c-o-c-k: but she is just as vain
And proud as that barnyard fowl.

JAQUES.
That couple,
Seems to be quarreling.

MRS. GOSSIP.
Mr. and Mrs. Firestone:
They are both insanely jealous of each other.—
Moreover, these ladies, like hosts of others,
Are envious of each other's good fortune,
Jealous of each other's so-called charms,
Live beyond their means; and are sad victims
Of woman's three cardinal vices.

SHIPMAN.
What are they?

MRS. GOSSIP.
The love of dress; the love of displaying
Their charms; and the love of being adored
By men in general.

SHIPMAN.
Ha, ha! severe but true.
Now, the men: what have you learned about them?

MRS. GOSSIP.
Enough! Enough! but you know them yourself.

SHIPMAN.
There goes Belinda, surrounded by Reginald,
Arthur, Walter and Hubert: these gentlemen
Courted her most ardently before marriage,
And they still keep at it.

MRS. GOSSIP.
Isn't it scandalous!—
The rest, are now crossing in a group: come,
As they are all in the ballroom, let's go there.

SHIPMAN. (*to* JAQUES)
Mrs. Gossip was severely criticising guests
Of my daughter's party: I ought have objected,
But she is a woman; besides, there is truth
In what she says. (*Exeunt all, door at right*)

Enter BELINDA, *right*; *she hides in parlor.*

BELINDA.
My four ardent bachelor gallants: what joy
It is to tease them! How did I ever leave
Ballroom, unseen? They will soon run me down.

Enter REGINALD, ARTHUR, WALTER, HUBERT, *right.*

REGINALD.
Where , O where, is Mrs. Waller!

BELINDA.
Here I am!
What would you have of me?

ARTHUR.
You WERE our sun!
You gave us light!

WALTER.
(Blinding us too sometimes!)

HUBERT.
And when you disappeared, when you got married,
All was in darkness!

BELINDA.

O, you arch flatterers.—
Ha, ha, almost a literal repetition,
Of our talk on the plaza, ten years ago,
At my birthday party.

REGINALD.

That was six months,
Before Waller, the lucky dog, married you.

BELINDA.

There comes Edmund on platform: he sees us
And looks annoyed: let's go back to the ballroom.

BACHELORS.

Oh, just as you please. (*Exeunt, door at right*)

(EDMUND *who entered, right, descends steps*: *Music, softly heard, comes from ballroom.*)

EDMUND.

Belinda, my wife, is playing the coquette,
With these former beaux of hers: shallow fops,
Who go about to coddle foolish women,
With a lustfully ulterior motive. (*Pause*)
"Vanity of vanities; all is vanity!" saith
The Preacher: and I begin to think he's right;
For I won the girl of my choice: and have
Two lovely children: God be thanked for them!
They are everything, even more, than I hoped:
But marriage—with its dreamed of delights:
Its intoxications, its sensuous pleasures,
And its other vastly more refined relations,
Seems to fall far short of one's anticipations.
And yet, without marriage, there might as well
Be no earth; nor (God forgive) heaven neither!
It is a marvelous mixture of sin and sanctity:
And nothing else whatever could at all produce
A Paradise.

(*Starts thru door at right, but shuts it again*)

O, misery! there go Belinda and Philip;
Joined in the voluptuous familiarity,
Of a seductive waltz. She promised me,
She would repel his lecherous attentions!

(*Sits on sofa, sadly*)

Enter GRANDPA SHIPMAN, *limping along with a cane; aided by an attendant, door at left.*

GRANDPA.

Glad to see you, Edmund!

EDMUND.

Ah, Grandpa Shipman!
And how do you do?

GRANDPA.

Don't ask me, how I do;
Let Shakespeare answer that question instead:
He says that in the drama of Human Life,
The Acts, are Seven Ages: I am now in
The sixth age: Edmund, what does he say that
The Almighty stage-manager shifts that into?

EDMUND.

The passage runs thus: "The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side;
His youthful hose, well sav'd, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,
Turning again towards childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound."

GRANDPA.

That describes me:
Ha,ha! that's me exactly! Well, proceed;
Now let's see my finish.

EDMUND.

"Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness, and mere oblivion;
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything."

GRANDPA.

Well let these decays come: so long as
They bring with them second childishness!
For that, fits one for heaven: and my wife,
And other dear ones, have gone there I hope.

EDMUND.

But Grandpa you are old, and I am young,
And your point of view don't appeal to me:
I love Belinda! and she—

GRANDPA.

Well, what about
My dear grandchild?

EDMUND.

She is very much admired.

GRANDPA.

And you don't like that.

EDMUND.

I do and I do not.
It ought to afford joy, to see one's wife,
Admired; the same as paintings or statuary,
Are admired: but when she gets admiration,
Surcharged with sensuality and appetite,—
That is horrible!

GRANDPA.

That kind is much given.

EDMUND.

The worst of it is that even married women
Like to receive it.

GRANDPA.

And so do married men.
It is the work of generations of degradation:
Hosts of people have gone daft on the subject
Of marriage. They have spurned the teachings
Of the Bible and have embraced the Koran's.
For like the Mohammedons, they believe,
And they hope, that heaven is a place of
Voluptuous pleasures; where all may revel
In sensuous things, without remorse. Now,
Marriage for such ignoble purposes, never
Fails to bring nothing but unhappiness:

But they still cling to their flesh-worship,
With the fond hope that in the next world,
Some way exists to make all these vices,
Produce bliss. This notion, they should be
Disabused of: for nothing can bring bliss;
No, not even in heaven—but purity.

EDMUND.

How did you live your married life?

GRANDPA.

Edmund,
My wife and I, worshiped God first, and then
Each other. Our lives, like many others,
Were a mixture of joy and grief. My wife
Bore me children: and the pangs of bearing,
Were soothed by the gladness that a soul
Was born into the world: but I thanked God,
And so did she, when such duties, (well done)
Had become a thing of the past. At the end,
It was a sweet communion of soul with soul:
Pure and passionless, blissfully satisfying;
With not a trace of any earthly appetite;
For former things had passed away forever.
And now I am ready to go where all things
Are New.

EDMUND.

Few look at it that way nowadays.

GRANDPA.

On the contrary, quite a number, live
The married life that we did. But perhaps
The majority, are carried away by
The world, the flesh and the devil.—
Now Edmund, I have some old crony friends,
That I just took from the banquet hall
Into the reception room there: I want you
To meet them.

EDMUND.

With pleasure! (*Exit* GRANDPA)
Ha, ha, these antedeluvians may be pardoned,
For having old-fossil ideas: soul to soul,
May satisfy them, but give me something far
More substantial: give me Belinda, always,
As she is now; with red blood in her veins:
A pure, divinely beautiful, voluptuous girl;
Full of desire and passion; wandering about,
In search of some object handsome enough,
To subdue her modesty: and only finding it,
In me!—Yet my anguish of heart just now?
No matter,—heaven exists in my marriage,
Or nowhere. (*He follows* GRANDPA *thru door, left*)

Re-enter BELINDA, *door at right.*

BELINDA.

Edmund is not here: I wonder where he went?

(*Enter* PHILIP, *door at right*)

What made you follow me?

PHILIP.

I couldn't help it.
Belinda, fair one! fairer now than ever!
Do you remember the remark I made to you,
On the plaza of your father's mansion,
Ten years ago?

BELINDA.

How should I: what was it?

PHILIP.

That I'm one who havn't been content simply
To admire luscious fruit, I have eaten of it:
And you are doubly palatable, because
You are—forbidden fruit!

BELINDA.

Philip, you rogue!
Remember, I am married.

PHILIP.

I can't forget it,
Nor you neither! even though I have only
Seen you semi-occasionally at parties.
Well, how do you like married life?

BELINDA.

Awfully!
In some respects:—not so well in others.

PHILIP.

What are its drawbacks?

BELINDA.

While palpable enough,
They are not so easy to put into words:
Before marriage, us women are unsatisfied;
But filled nevertheless with boundless hopes
And visions: after marriage, we're practically
Back numbers: we are "dead ones" with all,
Except our husbands. Of course I love mine!
And Flora and Fred, I fairly dote on them!
But I cannot forget how much I sacrificed,
To have them.

PHILIP.

But you are not a dead one:
Your marvelous loveliness, dominates men,
Edmund included, and makes them everyone,
Your abject slave.

BELINDA.

My abject slaves: but what does
It all amount to? or what did it amount to
When I was single? A King mounts his throne,
And receives the homage of his subjects:
That satisfies him, for he covets power:
But us girls, very beautiful naturally;
Adorn ourselves with great labor, and spend
Years in attaining proficiency in all arts
Of coquetry: and all we get from continual
And long continued use of our "black arts,"
Are admiring words and looks: bearing no fruit,
More than to show—what all hearts would do,
If they dared to. What we covet, is love!
And the result is a shadow; not substance:
Poor is the treasure, whose rich displaying
Can never end in barter or in sale.

PHILIP.

True,—
It is better far to give up these vanities,
Unless you make them render better returns.
But it is not too late; you can begin now:
I am eager to be a prospective bargainer
For this treasure! (*Puts arm around her*)

BELINDA.

(*Evades him*) Philip, I can forgive YOU much,
But don't be insulting! I am another's.

PHILIP. (*sadly*)

I don't think it is fair to us fellows,
For all you ladies to keep on keeping the
"For sale" sign up, long after the property
Has been "sold." Come Belinda, be merciful!
I must have a kiss. (*She deprecates by hands*)
By heaven, I am not to be foiled so easily:
I shall commit, what lawyers call—a trespass!
(*He tries forcibly to kiss her*: EDMUND *enters door at left, pulls him away, they scuffle*, EDMUND *downs* PHILIP, *he arises*)

EDMUND.

Leave this room, sir, and leave this house;
And don't dare ever enter it again! Go—.

PHILIP.

Oh, if you wish it. (*Ascends steps, exit left*)

EDMUND.

That claps the climax, when a libertine,
Tries to kiss you, in our own home!

BELINDA.

Edmund,
It wasn't my fault: I came here in search
Of you, and he followed shortly after.

EDMUND.

But dear, didn't I warn you against him:
I have seen him when under the influence
Of champagne, looking at you with passion
In his eyes: and passion is like an untam'd
Horse; sooner or later it will take the bit
Between its teeth.

BELINDA.

I'm not afraid of runaways.

EDMUND.

But I am!

BELINDA.

You surely don't think that I
Could ever become a fallen woman!

EDMUND.

No!
A thousand times no! I would stake my life,
Upon your always remaining virtuous!
But love, you are the recipient frequently,
Of a species of admiration, hardly fit
To be bestowed on anyone; and surely not
Upon a married woman.

BELINDA.

I don't solicit it.

EDMUND.

But you don't rebuff it: that is, if given
By handsome men.

BELINDA. (*imperiously*)

The fault isn't so awful:
Oh Edmund, you have hurt my pride terribly!
(*He embraces her*)

EDMUND.

Forgive me darling! I was beside myself!
But I have staked everything on my marriage:
And if it fails me; then the solid earth,
Gives way under my feet: there's naught left.
Many people claim that happiness can be got
In a number of ways: in religion, in nature,
In astronomy, literature, science, mechanics,
In music, in the fine arts, in friendship,
In patriotism, in charity, in toil and duty.
That, may be and probably is so, if one will
Assiduously cultivate them. On the contrary,
There are hosts of men and women everywhere,
Myself included, (who have cultivated some
Of these things in a perfunctory manner,
But never seriously), to whom wedded joys,
With their peculiar pleasures, seem to be
The one only thing worth while: either here,
Or hereafter. There are no goals besides;
Or if there be, they have not learned them.

BELINDA.

Marriage, and the delights pertaining to it,
Have always been the ONLY thing to me.
I must confess that my desires have been,
Much too indefinite, much too unlicensed;
But I have changed a lot during ten years
Of wedlock: and you and I dear, will try
To make our home a paradise.
(*Enter* FRED *and* FLORA *left*)
Look; Fred and Flora, descending the steps
Hand in hand!

FLORA.

Oh dear Mama and Papa, we just came from
Banquet hall, where we have been looking
At the tinware. Such shiny pretty things!
And so many of them. Were they all presents?

BELINDA.

Yes dear, from the guests: we arranged them
On a table, so that when the guests went in
To dine, they were able to see them all.

FRED.

I don't think much of the guests' taste. , ,

EDMUND.

Why not Fred?

FRED.

Well, there are boilers, pots,
Pans, pails, cups, teakettles, coffeepots,

Washbowls, and soforths but not a single,
Tin-trumpet or tin-whistle: I'd have had,
More of them than anything else.

BELINDA.

But they,
Are articles of utility.

FRED.

What's that?

EDMUND.

Utility,
Means—useful.

FRED.

Well, ain't trumpets and whistles,
Useful on Thanksgiving and election days?

BELINDA.

Ha, ha, Fred! they are useful for CERTAIN
Purposes; but the other things are useful
For housekeeping.

FLORA.

Papa, where's Grandpa Shipman?

EDMUND.

In the reception room.

FLORA.

Oh I love to be
With him! He is big like a man; but acts
Just like a child: Come Fred, let us go
To him.

BELINDA.

Good-bye my darlings!

FLORA AND FRED.

Good-bye!

(*Exeunt* FRED *and* FLORA, *door at left*)

BELINDA.

O, Edmund, we can both surely cast all
Mistrust aside; and have perfect faith,
In each other! for how could ever two such
Sweeties, fail to bind eternally together,
The two souls that begot them! (*Embrace*)

Enter REGINALD, ARTHUR, WALTER, *and* HUBERT, *door at right*; *they interrupt embracing.*

REGINALD.

Oh, say, come now, share the embrace around!

BACHELORS.

Yes, yes!

BELINDA.

They are not meant for outsiders.

WALTER.

We know you don't mean that: we will get ours,
When hubbie's away!

BACHELORS.

Yes, when hubbie's away!

EDMUND.

Fellows, don't you dare to be disrespectful,
To my wife!

BACHELORS.

Why Waller, you are not offended,
Are you?

EDMUND.

No boys!—But let me give you some
Good advice: Lots of men both young and old,
Poison their minds, with vulgar and debased
Ideas of women; except in the case of those
Who are dear to them. There is a sanctity,
A purity, about all women, (even though
A few do fall into temptation), that should
Command reverence and devotion! Fellows,
You must not hold women so cheap.

ARTHUR.

But Waller,
You were as bad as anyone on that score,
Before you married.

EDMUND.

I know that I was;
But I now see the baseness of my course.

HUBERT.

It is not so very easy for the virtuous,
To overcome the weaknesses of the flesh;
Then how can us bad eggs do it?

EDMUND.

You must do,
What I have done: look to a Higher Power.
He is anxious to help you, and will help,
If you try to help yourselves.

BACHELORS.

We will try!
And hope to be soon, not traducers of women,
But their champions!

Enter HOMER *and* VIRGINIA, *door at right.*

REGINALD.

Aha, here come Homer and Virginia: that pair of
Wedded lovers: two persons--but a single soul;
Two hearts--beaten into one!

HOMER.

Hush your flattery.
We have had nothing but compliments, ever since
We were child lovers.

VIRGINIA.

Really, we shall commit,
Some flagrant act of infidelity, against
Each other soon, to force a change of tune.

BELINDA.

Did the guests remark our absence?

VIRGINIA.

No one,
Spoke of it.

BELINDA.

I came out to find Edmund:
And a series of events have kept me here:--
I must not delay longer; a quick apology,
Is due them.

HOMER.

The most of them, are having
Some discussion with the Pastor.

ARTHUR.

That is
The Pastor of Poor People's Church, isn't it,
Who had the children sing for us at the
Birthday party?

BELINDA.

The very same: we both felt
That the Church ought to be represented here.

HUBERT.

Where is the Pastor that married you?

EDMUND.

Abroad:
Father and Mother, went there too, last month.

BELINDA.

And left Edmund in sole charge of his big
Banking business.--Excuse me; I go to guests.

HOMER.

You are saved the going: here they come,
In a bunch!

Enter GUESTS, *door at right.*

BELINDA. (*to* GUESTS)

I was just coming to make amends,
For my absence!

GUESTS.

Don't speak of it, we pray!

PASTOR.

Edmund, we have gotten into an argument,
Which is proving quite a novel diversion.
The suggestion was just made, that in order
Not to interfere with the few dancers,
We come in here and have it out.

EDMUND.

An argument!
What was it about?

PASTOR.

A subject,--peculiarly
Appropriate to this occasion: in view of
There being so many married people present;
And the festivity itself, being a wedding
Anniversary.

MANY OF GUESTS. (*loudly*)

Pastor, says that there is
No "marriage," in Heaven! Isn't it absurd!

EDMUND.

The very length, breadth, depth, and height,
Of absurdity! Pastor, you don't, you can't,
Really believe that.

PASTOR.

I can, I do, believe it:
And I think I can make you, and the rest,
Believe it too.

MANY OF GUESTS.

O, never! Never! Never!

JAQUES.

Well friends, now we have, in legal phrase,
Joined issue: He, and those who do agree
With him, affirm; and the others, deny it.
Let us thresh the subject out, in an informal
General debate, then have a show of hands;
To enable each one, after having heard
And weighed arguments, to express a belief
On the subject.

GUESTS.

That's the idea! Let's begin!
That is if it be agreeable to our hostess.

BELINDA.

(*Bell*) With all my heart! But first we'll go
And partake of some fruit, wine and cake:
That bell says it awaits us. Please go on
To the banquet hall: I will get those in
The ballroom, and follow you.

(*Exit* BELINDA, *door at right;* GUESTS *ascend steps, and joined by* BELINDA *and others, exeunt, left, as curtain descends*)

Orchestra plays a tune. The parlor "setting" continues also in the next scene, and this interval occurs, to prevent monotony.

SCENE: Part II.—*Parlor of the Waller Mansion: being merely a continuation of Scene first.*

Enter Everybody, left, they descend steps to Parlor; but a few young couples cross and exit to ballroom; from whence comes music, softly heard.

SHIPMAN.

My dear friends, having had our dessert,
Which, coming as it did fifteen minutes
After our banquet, was doubly enjoyable,
I think we are all anxious to proceed
With marriage question discussion.

GUESTS.

Yes! Yes!

SHIPMAN.

Then let the Pastor, take a position
In centre; and we will arrange ourselves
On either side. (*They do so*)
Now, the Speaker, will present his views,
And we will join in with running remarks,
As the spirit moveth us.

PASTOR.

My contention is,
That "There is no marriage in Heaven."
The question arose by chance: having arisen,
I am eager to establish its truthfulness:
Not for my own vainglory; but that you may

Be enlightened: that you may know the truth,
And the truth will set you free,—from the
Illusions and delusions, everywhere now
Prevalent concerning marriage.

GUESTS.

Hear! Hear!

PASTOR.

This knowledge is revealed in the Bible.
In New Testament, we have three separate
References to it; all agreeing in detail;
By St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke; who give
A colloquy between Jesus, and the Sadducees,
Concerning a woman who had had seven husbands.

GUESTS. (*merrily*)

All at once!

PASTOR.

Ha, ha,—no, one at a time.—
The Sadducees queried of Jesus: "WHOSE WIFE,
In the resurrection, shall she be of them"?
(PASTOR *now reads Bible, he had produced*)
Jesus answered them: "In the resurrection,
They neither marry, nor are given in marriage,
But are as the angels of God in Heaven."

SOME LADIES.

But, WE haven't had seven husbands!

SOME GENTS.

But,
Many of you would like to have had them!

SOME LADIES.

Many of you men would like to have had
Seven times seven wives!

MRS. MALLORY.

Laying bantering aside,
What we meant was, that the aforesaid lady,
By having seven might have forfeited her right
To have any husband.

PASTOR.

If that were so, Jesus,
Would have so said: no, the language is plain.
Now then,—coming from the lips of Jesus,
Who will be foolhardy enough to question
The truthfulness of this revelation, that,
Us mortals, on entering heaven, are like
Unto Angels; and that the merely human
Relationship of marriage, has no existence
There whatsoever. (*Auditors are impressed*)

EDMUND.

Well,—if there is no marriage in heaven;
I don't want to go there!

SOME GENTS AND LADIES.

Nor I! Nor I!

OTHER GENTS AND LADIES.

Shame on you! Shame!

VIRGINIA.

Why marriage IS heaven!

SOME GENTS AND LADIES (*raptly*)

Yes, marriage is heaven!

FIRESTONE.

Marriage is HELL!

OTHER GENTS AND LADIES. (*fiercely*)

That's so! That's so!

PASTOR.

No,—marriage is not, necessarily hell:—
Nor is it heaven; but used to be one of
The main avenues leading there: nowadays,
It threatens to become an avenue leading
To the other place.

MANY GENTS AND LADIES.

But why DON'T they have marriage in heaven?

PASTOR.

We must assume that, in the wisdom of God,
Not to have it there, is RIGHT: if it appear
Otherwise to those present here, and others,
It is evident that you, and they, are in
Crucial need of conversion by enlightenment:
For life is uncertain; and it is better,
Not to postpone repentance to the last hour;
Yea, perchance postpone it forever.

MANY GENTS AND LADIES.

Proceed,
With your enlightenment; for we don't think
That it is right.

PASTOR.

It is ordained by God,
That souls be brought into life; and that
They be born in wedlock; life is a school
To fit us for heaven: marriage is a part
Of the curriculum: it could no more compose
A heaven, than the schoolroom could contain
The ultimate triumphs that are always won
From schooling: we should thank God, that,
We are not condemned to it forever.
In life's school, as in others, a requisite
Of all scholars, is to have faith in tutors:
Therefore, we must have faith in the Bible;
The saints and the prophets; for they are
Special instructors in heavenly things.

GRANDPA SHIPMAN AND TWO OLD CRONIES.

(*Clapping their hands*) Bravo! Bravo!

SOME GENTS AND LADIES.

But really, what is heaven like?

PASTOR.

Were that known,
It would be impossible to give expression,
Adequately in language. It has not been seen
Except by the eye of faith: faith, you know,
Is the substance of things long hoped for;
The evidence of things not seen. The most
Sublime vision, in few words, we get of it,
Is this beautiful passage from Scripture:
"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have

entered into the heart of man, the things which
God hath prepared for them that love Him."

MANY GENTS AND LADIES. (*raptly*)
It must be a lovely place!

GRANDPA AND OLD CRONIES.
Blessed be the name of the Lord!

MR. HARRIS.
Why, I'll venture to say that nine out of ten
Persons, believe that, and hope too that,
Marriage exists in heaven.

PASTOR.
If that be so ;
It only goes to show how men and women,
Can construe sacred things after their
Own fashion, clean from the evident purpose
Of the sacred things themselves. However,
I think that we should except large masses
Of poor toilers: who live the married life,
Nearer to the Bible idea; and who, while
Not perfectly aware that marriage does
Not exist there, can be easily reconciled
To it.

MR. GADABOUT.
What IS the Bible idea of marriage?

PASTOR.
A union of the souls, and not of the senses.

MR. GADABOUT.
Yes, that's the way it ought to be—but isn't!

(*Enter* FRED *and* FLORA *merrily, left*;
BELINDA *whispers them, and they retire*)

MRS. SHEPARD. (*matronly*)
Children! sweet children! what would the home,
Be without them! That reminds me, Pastor,
Surely they can't get along without the home,
With its sacred associations, in heaven;
The fathers and mothers, husbands and wives,
Sons and daughters, brothers and sisters.
Home, home, sweet, sweet, home!
There's no place like home!

PASTOR.
These eternal bonds of love, can never
Be broken; even after marital relations,
Have passed away forever. Then think too,
Of the joy of becoming angelic members,
Of our heavenly Father's home!

MR. TAPPEN.
But say,
If there is no marriage there, dear Parson,
How could we flirt with one another's wives,
And make love to all the pretty girls?

PASTOR.
Ha, ha!
You will have to outgrow those weaknesses.
(*Some couples of lovers, engrossed in each other, cross platform from right to left*)

MRS. GOSSIP.
There go the lovers! No marriage, no lovers:
That would be sad indeed!

PASTOR.
Are you not glad
To think, that after having drunk to dregs,
Of the delights and sorrows of human love,
Another and a better love awaits them
Up above—the love divine!

MRS. GADABOUT.
If they don't marry, what DO they do in heaven?

PASTOR.
Love God—and each other—with a holy love:
And have blissful duties to perform; and
Blissful pleasures to enjoy!

MR. PEKOK.
But there isn't
Any kind of love worth a snap, except the kind
That ends in marriage!

MANY GENTS AND LADIES.
That's so! That's so!

PASTOR.
Do you not err, in your conception of love? Listen,-
A lawyer asked Jesus, this question: "Master, which
is the great commandment, in the law?" Jesus said
unto him: (*Reads Bible*) "Thou shalt love the Lord
thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul,
and with all thy mind:' This is the first and
great commandment. And the second is like unto
it, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' On
these two commandments hang all the law and the
prophets." In His Sermon on the Mount, this pas-
sage occurs: (*Reads Bible*) "Ye have heard that
is was said by them of old time, 'Thou shalt not
commit adultery:' But I say unto you, That who-
soever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath
committed adultery with her already in his heart."

MRS. TAPPEN.
Connubial love, is narrow and restricted,
When compared with the other kind.

PASTOR.
Yes,—
The one kind of love, was ordained simply
To generate the species, also to inculcate
A thousand virtues, like chastity devotion
Constancy and soforth, and then pass forever
Away. The other kind of love is universal:
It is a foretaste of heaven.

MR. OGLE.
Pastor, how can any one ever go amongst
Present day society ladies—beautiful sirens
That they are; displaying a thousand charms—
Without becoming intoxicated and enraptured!

PASTOR.
Scripture says: To be carnal-minded is death:
To be spiritual-minded is life everlasting.

ELDERLY LADY.
Whenever married people, order their lives,
In strict obedience to the divine commands,
The ecstasies of youth, the griefs of maturity,
The mellowness of age, sweetly merge into the
Peace of God which passeth all understanding!

SOME GENTS AND LADIES.
Well, let's take a vote!

MANY GENTS AND LADIES.
Yes, Question! Question!

SHIPMAN.
Are you ready Ladies and Gentlemen,
To render your opinions?

GUESTS.
We are! We are!

SHIPMAN.
"Motion" is carried almost unanimously.
Now, all those "in doubt"; that is, those
Who have not made up their minds, will please
Raise their right hands.
(SHIPMAN, ARTHUR, MRS. SHEPARD, *and one married couple raise their right hands*)
Five persons in all;
That have not arrived at any conclusion.—
Now, all those who agree with the Pastor.

PASTOR.
No, not agree with me, but with the truth
Which I represent.

SHIPMAN.
That is what I meant,—
All who agree with the Pastor, will please
Raise their right hands.
(JAQUES, REGINALD, MR. MALLORY, MRS. FIRESTONE, ELDERLY LADY, GRANDPA *and* 2 CRONIES, *and one young unmarried couple raise their hands*)
Ten persons in all;
That believe there is no marriage in heaven.—
Now, all those who are opposed, will please
Raise their right hands.
(EDMUND, BELINDA, MRS. GOSSIP, WALTER, HUBERT, *two young unmarried couples, and most all the rest* (*that have not already voted*) *consisting of married couples of all ages, raise hands.*)
Twenty four persons in all;
That believe there is marriage in heaven.—
Ten to twenty four; so you see dear Pastor,
That a very large majority have signified
That they expect to indefinitely continue,
Their wedding felicities—or infelicities—
In the next world.

PASTOR.
I feared they might do so;
The great majority of people everywhere,
Look at it the same way. It is sad to see
So many laboring under this delusion,
As it militates against their well being!

BELINDA.
(*Taking Edmund's hands*) O, Edmund dear,
We will still be wife and husband up there!

EDMUND.
(*Gives her loving look: turns to* PASTOR.)
Pastor, we said at the start that the idea,
Was absurd: and it seems so yet; that is
In my opinion.

MANY GENTS AND LADIES.
And mine!

JAQUES.
Your opinions!
I wouldn't give a fig for them.

MANY GENTS AND LADIES.
And why not;
Melancholy Jaques?

JAQUES.
It would be impolite,
For me to tell you.

MANY GENTS AND LADIES.
Go ahead, we insist!

JAQUES.
"What fools these mortals be," said Puck:
And he stigmatized us rightly,—for we set
Our spurious wisdom up above the Almighty's.
Perverse, ignorant, obstinate, we refuse
To read the DIRECTIONS that God has attached
To all His wondrous work: (and what simple
Household article requires not directions?)
We refuse either, to read the Holy Bible,
Or to follow its commands; and use things,
To suit our own debased appetites. But,
Be ye not deceived; God is not mocked;
For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall
He also reap!

MANY GENTS AND LADIES.
Hear the crusty old bachelor!

MR. GADABOUT.
Jaques is right: We sow the wind, and we reap
The whirlwind!
(*Philip intoxicated, had entered left, descended steps and passed thru guests unnoticed to front: he now confronts* EDMUND.)

EDMUND.
You here! I told you to leave the house!

PHILIP.
I did leave it, but I came back again.

EDMUND.
Confound it! I forgot to tell servants
Not to admit you. Well, what do you want?

PHILIP.
Waller, you have most cruelly lacerated
My tender heart: I must have reparation!
We'll fight a duel: Ladies, you be—seconds:
(*Ladies demur*) What, you refuse? Ah, I see;

You must always be—firsts. I went home Ed.,
(After I left the nearby cafe), and got
A brace of pistols: (*Produces two revolvers*)
Here, take yours, and we will have it out.

EDMUND.

(*Taking revolver*) Give me the other one:
You don't know what you're doing Philip;
You are intoxicated: (*Coaxingly*) Come,
Give it to me. (*He tries to wrest revolver from him; it goes off;* EDMUND *falls*: PHILIP *is hustled aside, and stands there dazed*)

SHIPMAN.

(*Bending down*) He is shot thru the breast!
Lay him on the sofa: I'll go for a surgeon.
(EDMUND *is put on sofa; wound is staunched*)

EDMUND.

Belinda, I am dying!

BELINDA. (*clasps him*)

O don't say that dear!
But you suffer darling! there's blood spots,
On your white vest!

EDMUND.

That's just what you said,
When I won you, ten years ago! But this is
No trick,—this is the real thing.

BELINDA.

Too real!

EDMUND.

Where are Fred and Flora?

BELINDA.

I sent for them dear.
(*Enter* FRED & FLORA, *door*: *they clasp* PAPA)

FRED and FLORA.

Why dear Papa, you look awful pale and sick!

EDMUND.

Yes darlings! Papa is sick, and has got
To leave you for a while!

FRED & FLORA.

Got to leave us!
For how long?

EDMUND.

I can't just say my darlings!

FRED & FLORA.

What will we do without you Papa? If you
Don't come back again we'll come to you!

EDMUND.

You shall dearies—sometime!—Dear Pastor,
The love that I have for my two children,
Must be the kind you term "divine"!

PASTOR.

Indeed it is!—
But talking wearies you.

EDMUND.

It eases the pain!—
Perhaps you were right, when you said before,
That this kind of love makes the better heaven.
Maybe I ought to put much more of the divine,
Into my love for Belinda: for my feeling
Towards her, is a passion! a perfect passion!

PASTOR.

Passion, is pardonable, even commendable,
In the heyday of life: but all should learn,
Not to expect to, yea not even to desire to,
Carry it into the future life.

EDMUND.

But how,
Can the young people learn this?

PASTOR.

From the old;
By heeding their advice. (*Pause*)

EDMUND.

O such pain!

BELINDA. (*clasps him*)

Are you worse dear?

EDMUND.

Yes dear, the end is nigh.
O Belinda, surely I can fly my airy passage,
With a freer wing, if I have an assurance,
(Made doubly surer by this solemn hour),
That you will be ever true to me, dear;
That you will be my wife forever!

BELINDA.

O Edmund,
My darling husband! Never have the shadow
Of a doubt, of my everlasting constancy!

EDMUND.

Our married life—like all married lives—
Has had some drawbacks here: but up there,
God willing, our fullest anticipations
Will be realized! (*Drops back unconscious*)
(*Enter* SHIPMAN *with* SURGEON, *door at right*)

SHIPMAN.

Surgeon, I hope we're not too late!

SURGEON.

I hope not!
(*Diagnoses wound*) Alas, wound was mortal,
From the start: nothing could save him!

EDMUND.

Good-bye Belinda, Flora, Fred! Good-bye!

SURGEON.

(*After a scrutiny*) He is dead!
(*Curtain*)

ACT III.

SCENE 1.—*Pleasure Park, and Tabernacle, in the Paradise of the Hyperboreans, northern Greece. The Park is paved with gold: the wings and walls are resplendent with paintings of Seraphims, Cherubims and Angels: and there hangs from the flies a dazzling mass of celestial foliage, flowers and fruits. The tabernacle is represented only by an arched entrance, surmounted by a huge Cross of flowers, at right middle wing. The Sky, with constantly passing clouds, is seen in the rear. A bench on either side at front.*

(*Enter* PROLOGUE, *in front of curtain*)

PROLOGUE.

Pardon, gentle hearers all, our vain attempt
To present now to your view—a Paradise!
But since THOUGHT can construct, tear down,
And rebuild, many air castles in an instant,—
If our scene does your imagination rouse,
You can create a paradise in your minds;
Sublimer far than limit of this stage allows.
That will be quite proper too—for 'tis said
That a paradise has that marvelous power,
Of looking as each one wants it to look.

(*Exit* PROLOGUE: *The curtain rises on Park*)

Enter from Tabernacle, 4 MAIDENS, *with long thin trumpets, and their* CONDUCTOR.

CONDUCTOR.

Now, my melodious heralds, trumpet-tongued
As are the Angels,—blow out a sonorous call,
For our people to gather at the Tabernacle.

(*They blow horns, and return to tabernacle*)

Enter HESTIA *and* ARETHUSA, (*maidens*), *right.*

HESTIA.

Arethusa, you say a spirit came last night;
To live in our paradise of love and light?

ARETHUSA.

Yes Hestia—one, Edmund; who of dust is free;
But soul yet clinging to earthy matrimony.

HESTIA.

Ah! clogged by this weight it could not rise,
Into the pure ether of the heavenly skies!

ARETHUSA.

Too pure for earth— the current (that runs
To this earthly Eden of us Hyperboreans)
Bore it hither: to be purged of this sin,
And properly fitted heaven to enter in.

HESTIA.

We will effect his cure in days, yea hours;
No spot on earth so pure as this land of ours.

ARETHUSA.

"A terrestrial paradise; with bright sky,
Golden fruits, everlasting youth and peace,
And perpetual spring"—so runs mythology,
Of a land supposed to lie north of Greece.

HESTIA.

Just as the Greeks fabled it in times past,
Us Hyperboreans live—free from Boreas' blast.

Enter EDMUND, *distractedly, left.*

EDMUND.

Give me, O give me, my Belinda back!

ARETHUSA.

Hush! you are in a spiritual world now;
And must rid your mind of material things:
See, here come the people of our Kingdom,—
The Hyperboreans; who have eternal youth.

Enter, from both sides, the Hyperboreans, consisting of 4 Elders and 4 Matrons, robed in white, with golden crowns on heads, and a lot of others of both sexes (apparently), and various ages from childhood to age (apparently), all clothed in silks, satins, velvets and laces, plenteously sprinkled with gems, with heads adorned with wreaths of flowers, and also wearing, (excepting children) a luminous circle (halo)around heads: their faces, attire etc. are celestial in appearance; and their purity and holiness are so apparent, that it would seem a sacrilege to think of them otherwise. They exchange loving greetings with each other in dumb show.

EDMUND.

Eternal youth? Why some of them are aged;
And others are in middle life.

HESTIA.

It seems so,—
But it is only seeming: for there is no
Age in spirit: the white-haired are the wiser:—
And surely wisdom hath its place everywhere.

EDMUND.

Why have they all lined up back there?

ARETHUSA.

To sing.
It is our regular custom to meet together
Here in Pleasure Park, socially and lovingly:
And we always begin it with a song of Praise,
There in front of Tabernacle.

EDMUND.

I pray you,
In what are they clothed?

ARETHUSA.

In humility.

EDMUND.

Humility!
Why don't human beings wear more of that,
For their best attire is ugly in comparison.
What is that luminous circle—that halo—
Around many of their brows?

HESTIA.

It is a crown;
That they wear eternally. They all won it,
When long ago as mortals, they rose above
The temptations and troubles of the world;
Living righteous lives.

EDMUND.

The world is too full
Of sorrows!

HESTIA.

No cross—no crown—you know!

EDMUND.

Celestial! Angelic! they undoubtedly are,
In their aspect; both males and females.

ARETHUSA.

Male and female, say you—we have them not:
That is but the way in which souls are begot.
Neither have we young, old, husband, wife,
Father, mother, son, daughter, in our life:
These ties only to the material relate;
And are superceded by the immortal state:
Yet there are phases of the love divine,
Around which these sweet memories entwine;
As all streams that flow into the ocean,
Help to create its majestical motion.
But each and every soul differs in size,
And also in its God-given qualities:
For God designed heaven like earth to be,
A place teeming with infinite variety.

EDMUND.

Being now an immortal myself, I begin slowly
To comprehend you.—But pray tell me this:
How can you immortals, still retain memory
Of mortal things?

HESTIA.

Oh we all remember them,
As things long past: as one recalls childhood.

ARETHUSA.

Many centuries ago, all us Hyperboreans,
Were mortals: but dying, our immortal parts
Were wafted to this Paradise; just the same
As yours were yesterday.

EDMUND.

With what rapidity,
Does the Spirit freed from cumbersome flesh,
Traverse the atmospheric routes leading here?

ARETHUSA.

As quick as a flash of lightning.

(*Enter Attendant with* 3 *men and* 2 *women* PATIENTS.)

HESTIA.

See, the Attendant has brought to listen
To the sweet singing, the Spirits diseased;
Who like yourself, not being fit to ascend
To heaven at death, are sojourning with us
To be purged of their sins.

EDMUND.

I can't imagine,
Why I am here: maybe they are puzzled too.

ARETHUSA.

You will all know sometime: the good Lord,
Does everything wisely and for the best.

HESTIA.

Please excuse us now; we must take places
In the lines.

EDMUND.

Many thanks for your kindness!

(HESTIA *and* ARETHUSA *join singers,* EDMUND *takes seat at right; the* 5 PATIENTS *are sitting at left*)

A Clergyman comes out on Tabernacle steps.

CLERGYMAN. (*recites*)

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him all creatures here below;
Praise Him above you heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost!

(*When he ends, all sing it; then he retires*)

The Hyperboreans, at a signal, sing a Sacred Classic, accompanied by the orchestra. In response to an encore from audience they sing a Hyperborean Rhapsody. Music then ceases.

1ST ELDER.

Celestials! now follow your own inclinations!
But please remember that in a few moments;
We are going to have our usual refreshment;
Angel cake, golden fruit and juice of grape.

(*Exeunt all, except* 4 *Elders and* 4 *Matrons who come front to* 5 *Patients and* EDMUND)

1ST MATRON.

Dear Patients! music is one of the things
That satisfies the soul: I hope that it
Has made you happy!

ALL PATIENTS.

No, we are not happy.

2ND ELDER.

Why what ails you?

ALL PATIENTS.

We hanker for the world!

2ND MATRON.

Were you happy there?

ALL PATIENTS.

Well, not—not exactly.
But 'tis said no one can be happy anyhow.

3RD ELDER.

Anyone can be happy by doing what is right.

1ST PATIENT. (*man*)

I made big money in the world!

2ND PATIENT. (*girl*)
And I,
Had all the fellows crazy after me!

3RD PATIENT. (*man*)
And I,
Got plenty of booze!

3RD MATRON.
And pray what is that?

3RD PATIENT.
Stuff to drink: whiskey—is booze.

3RD ELDER.
Indeed!—
They never called it that in ancient times,
When we were mortal and lived there.

EDMUND.
And I,
Have a wife, whom I do fairly idolize!

4TH ELDER. (*to* EDMUND)
Patients, suffering from malady like yours,
Are coming here frequently lately. It seems,
There prevail among mortals, ungodly ideas
Concerning marriage, and the sexual relation:
Ideas which at death leave a taint on soul.

4TH PATIENT. (*woman*)
Do most patients get well?

4TH MATRON.
Almost invariably.

EDMUND.
How long will we have to stay here?

1ST ELDER.
Edmund,
You only came yesterday; but you others
Have been here longer, of various periods.
You stay till it is God's will that you go:
What way you will be removed, we know not;
All patients vanish unseen.

5TH PATIENT. (*man*)
It may be that
They run away.

1ST MATRON.
That is highly improbable,
As most all soon become blissfully content:
Those that leave behind loved ones in the world,
And long to be reunited; calmly trust it
To Him who doeth all things well.

2ND ELDER.
Then too,
We have high walls with gates; and Patients
Are not permitted to go out unattended:
Besides, there are those moral influences,
That God has implanted in all His works,
To superinduce obedience:—but evil too,
Has its agencies; and neither walls, gates,
Nor supernatural bars, are strong enough,
To restrain the rebellious soul: therefore,
Of the many Patients we have had here
During the past centuries, some very few,
May possibly have yielded up themselves,
To the invisible forces of the devil.

1ST PATIENT.
May I ask about customs and modes of life?

2ND MATRON.
Yes.—Our Hyperborean Kingdom is patterned
After Heaven.

2ND PATIENT.
Surely you never saw heaven.

3RD ELDER.
Some of our Theologians, deeply immersed
In rapturous thought profound, have seen it
In their ecstasy!

3RD MATRON.
We have a perfect paradise!
Each one of us has blissful duties to do,
And blissful pleasures to enjoy. All things
Are held in common; and distribution is made
To individuals, according as they have need.

4TH ELDER.
Here we have no passion, lust, hatred, envy,
Jealousy, covetousness; nor anything else
That is carnal or impure: all is Spiritual.
Our bliss is great; and is always growing:
For love, beauty, peace and joy are infinite;
And ever keep pace with the soul's expansion.

4TH MATRON.
The corner stone of our Kingdom is love!
The more we love, the more we love to love,
For it is limitless. We are one big family,
Living in the many mansions of our Father.
Divested of all earthly ties whatsoever:
(Except those that were woven in the soul):
For merely human organism and mentality,
Have forever passed away into the Divine.

EDMUND.
Then you do not marry, nor give in marriage.

1ST MATRON.
Would you have us go back to our A B C—s:
Shall we have borne an earthly cross in vain!

1ST ELDER.
Beloved, there is more joy in heaven,
Over the saving of one soul, than over
A score that have not gone astray! so,
It seems needless for me to tell you,
How eager we are to help you to get there:—
We shall treat you as part of ourselves:
We shall all love you!

ALL ELDERS *and* MATRONS.
We shall all love you!

2ND MATRON.
All heavenly things are ineffably sublime,
After one has grown into them! This takes
Effort and time: you should succeed well,
Here with us, far from world's temptations.

EDMUND.
Why can't everybody enter heaven?

2ND ELDER.
Because,
Heaven is pure; and if vice were to enter,
It would soon become impure: and then too,
Who that does vice would ever be contented.
The good Lord is eager to have all there!

3RD ELDER.
Look, Attendants are making preparations
For the refreshments. Let us take a stroll;
We can just get back in time.

4TH PATIENT. (*aside*)
Thank God! there is hope of Salvation here!
Us poor Magdalens, who sinned in the world;
Long to become pure; even more than those,
Who have never fallen!
(*Exeunt Everybody, left*: EDMUND *lingers, and dropping on seat at left, moans*)

EDMUND.
Belinda! O Belinda!

Enter ROMEO, *right.*

ROMEO.
What ailest thee, good Spirit?

EDMUND.
Mourning over
A lost love!

ROMEO.
Love?—I was a model for lovers:
I am Romeo.

EDMUND.
What, the youth who loved Juliet?

ROMEO.
The very same.

EDMUND.
The world teems with your fame.

ROMEO.
I am amazed to hear that my name survives
On earth, despite the fact that I died
Many hundred years ago! Nevertheless,
I care naught now for fame; it is a myth:
To be of some use to others is everything.—
Tell me of thy love; maybe I can console thee!

EDMUND.
I had in the world, a beauteous maiden,
Whom I crave to have in these arms again!
Tell me what thou knowest of Spirit love?

ROMEO.
You know, a broken strand, is not the same
As an unbroken one; so all those love ties,
That are wrenched asunder in the world, by
Divorcement, estrangement, or another love,
Are not as strong here, as those undivided:
But they exist; and without any discord;
For love divine, surmounts all obstacles.

EDMUND.
But I want my wife, as wife!

ROMEO.
Ah, that accounts
For your being sent here to be purged;
You wanted the marriage relation, even
In the immortal life:—that is impossible.

EDMUND.
It seems merciless!

ROMEO.
The Lord's way is best!

EDMUND.
I can't believe it!

ROMEO.
But you will some day.
I felt same as you do, when in churchyard,
Supposing Juliet dead, I took the poison;
And disbelieving in the goodness of God,
Died, and was borne by invisible current,
To this land, where in a trice her Spirit,
To my delight joined me: for she awaking
From the trance that I had deemed death,
Took the poison I had left. We at once
Tried to resume our mortal love, but lacked
The power: for we were changed in form:
It was passion that made us SEEM the same.
Afterwards, a great light shone on us both;
Twofold in quality: a light like the sun,
And a light of intelligence! We thanked God!
For having shown us what love, REALLY was.

EDMUND.
It sounds well: but disagrees with my desires.—
Tell me Romeo, (if thou knowest,) when and where
My dear wife and I will be together again!

ROMEO.
Most Patients are cured within a few years:
If you are cured, and she is fit, some day
Your love and you, will reunite in heaven:
I know not whether you will first meet here.—
(*Attendants have just finished bringing in many small stands, some of gold, some of silver, and chairs to match, having set them all around the stage, and having placed on each stand, a cut glass dish of cake and fruit, and a decanter of wine with glasses, a few are entering among them is* JULIET).

ROMEO.
Ah, there is Juliet, now; just taking a seat
At one of the tables: I will introduce you.
Enter from Tabernacle, a Quartette, two of each sex (violin, cornet, harp, psaltery), who remain

on Tabernacle steps, and begin playing the "Angel Serenade." Playing begins just as EDMUND *and* ROMEO *reach* JULIET'S *stand, therefore introduction is made inaudibly: hearing music Everybody enters, right and left, silently take seats* (1 ELDER *or* 1 MATRON *and two others at each table*) *and listen to music, eating cake and fruit meanwhile: the Attendants pass around and pour out wine. In response to an encore Quartette sings and plays "The Palms"* (*solo and chorus*).

1ST MATRON. (*1st table*)
Beloved, now that the tumult of applause
Evoked by the inspiring music has subsided,
Let us all, in honor of musicians themselves,
Drink a sip of celestial wine!

EVERYBODY.
Yes! Yes!

1ST ELDER. (*2nd table*)
Are you ready?

EVERYBODY.
We are!

1ST ELDER.
Then all together!

3RD PATIENT. (*3rd table*)
(*Sips and throws out*), Celestial wine! Humbug!

2ND MATRON. (*4th table*)
Why, what ails it?

3RD PATIENT.
Bah! it is almost as much
Of a surprise to my stomach, as water is:
Not a drop of alcohol in it: if that is
The kind of appetizer, you hand out here,
I will take my chances in the other place!

2ND ELDER. (*3rd table*)
Did you ever have a more delicious drink?

3RD PATIENT.
(*Taking a flask from pocket*) Yes, right here!
(*Fills glass, drinks, and smacks lips*) Ah!—
Take a nip yourself. (*Hands flasks to Elder*)

2ND ELDER.
Thanks!—(*He reads label*) "Black and White."
(*Fills glass, takes sip, chokes, drops it*)
Bah! poisonous, burning, nauseating stuff!
What is it?

3RD PATIENT.
Whiskey—man—whiskey.

2ND ELDER.
I thought
It was: for all whiskey has a horrid smell,
Peculiarly its own:—but that of long ago,
Was far less strong. O, how man has fallen!
When he deems he can find pleasure or profit,
In such a diabolical concoction!

3RD MATRON. (*5th table*)
Attendant,
Where did he get it?

ATTENDANT.
I cannot say: unless,
When I took him for a ride a while ago,
Into that only part of inhabited world,
Which lies near to us.

3RD ELDER. (*6th table*)
But he had no money.

3RD PATIENT.
Anybody who loves booze, will always find
Some way to get it.

4TH MATRON. (*7th table*)
Is it not harrowing,
To see one of God's children intoxicated!
The disease may be incurable: and I doubt
If he could ever go to heaven like that.

4TH ELDER. (*8th table*)
Never fear—we will cure him! Remember,
In most all cases, their world appetites,
Are strong for a while.
The Quartette begins playing Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata"—and everybody listening becomes quiet again. In response to an encore Quartette plays a Fantasia. Quartette then retires in Tabernacle.
Enter an Attendant with 1st & 5th Patients, right.

ATTENDANT.
Most gracious Seraphims! these two Patients,
Purposely, it seems, wandering out of park,
Have each committed a flagrant transgression.
This one attempted to carnally embrace,
Two of our people.

1st MATRON.
With a lustful intent,
He might as well have tried to clasp sunlight,
For Spiritual forms are just as intangible.

5TH. PATIENT.
Then the Spiritual forms have nothing to fear
From me: for what pleasure can anyone get,
By merely communing with a lovely girl,
As one basks in the sunshine.

1ST. ELDER.
A rapture!
Infinitely greater than mortals ever had,
From the various ways of human communion.

5TH PATIENT.
I very much doubt it!

2ND ELDER.
Why should you not:
When in the world, you lusted after women;
And the canker has so infected your soul,
That even here, you cling to the delusion,
That the corporeal body, is everything.

5TH PATIENT.
I grant, you rightly call it a delusion;
For it gave me more pain than pleasure!

2ND MATRON.
Then you must help us to effect a cure.

ATTENDANT.
And this Patient, Most gracious Seraphims!
Tried to tear up a huge piece of the gold,
With which our streets are paved.

3RD ELDER.
Avarice,—
Was no doubt his besetting sin, when human;
And it still sticks to him in the Divine.
Is it any wonder that our Saviour said,
"How hardly shall the rich man enter heaven:
It is easier for a camel to go through
A needle's eye."

ATTENDANT.
What shall be done with him?

3RD MATRON.
Nothing! Kindness can do more than harshness.
Simply keep him under surveillance.

4TH ELDER. (to Patient)
My friend!
We do not buy, nor sell, anything here:
And were you to flee away, and take it
To worldly people; your labor would be vain,
For most of the money-changers look askance
At celestial treasure.

Everybody had arisen, and gathered around to hear examination of the two culprits, and Attendants have now cleared the stage of stands and chairs.

(ENTER *an Attendant, hastily, right*)

ATTENDANT.
Most gracious Seraphims! those evil Spirits;
Whose wiles are the undoing of the World;
Have again stolen in to harm our Patients!
(Thank heaven! their arts are lost on us.)

EVERYBODY. (*amazedly*)
Hah! the Twelve Temptations.

1ST ELDER. (to Attendant)
Where are they?

ATTENDANT.
I have been hunting them for ten minutes,
With no success. I didn't see them myself:
These two Patients; (*Points to* 1 & 5 *P.*)
Came and told me they had been accosted,
By a number of Spirits; each wearing name
Blazoned upon breast: some of these names
They were able to mention; which proved
That the seducers of mankind were here,
(On one of periodical visits they make,)
To tempt our Patients.

1ST MATRON.
And they succeeded!
For the Patients were just now apprehended,
While trying to resume the vices they had
When in the mortal state: the fires of which
Still smoulder in their systems.

1ST PATIENT.
Who begat,
Offspring so horrid, that merely being
In their company does contaminate?

2ND ELDER.
They,
Sprang full-grown from the brain of Satan!
And were sent from hades into the world,
To pervert mankind! Just as the copulation
Of the sunbeams, generates more brightness;
So the emanations from these evil demons,
Procreate like flies: and the vile progeny,
(Just as like to them as son to father,)
Swarms in every part of inhabited earth.

5TH PATIENT.
The names on their breasts, in so far as
We recall them, were the names of vices,
That have always wrought the most havoc,
With the souls of human beings: the vices,
Whose sad effects are everywhere discerned;
But were never seen PERSONIFIED!

2ND MATRON.
Because,
Being Spirits, they're invisible to mortals:
You both being immortals now, can see them;
And did see these particular ones.

3RD ELDER.
Perchance,
They may be lurking in some part of Park:
Let us go and search for them. Patients,
You have no idea where they went?

1ST PATIENT.
None at all;
As we told the Attendant.

(*Exeunt Everybody, right*)

Enter, as though from hiding back of the Tabernacle, 12 *Demon-spirits, with each's name blazoned on breast in fiery letters.*

1ST DEMON.
Are we all here? yes: then call the roll,
To see if every Demon is sound and whole!

2ND DEMON.
(*Calls roll.*) Avarice—Lust—Intemperance—
Gluttony—Sloth—Pride—Envy—Jealousy—
Fraud—Treachery—Hate—Violence!

(*As each one's name is called he replies "Here" and takes his place in column*)

ALL DEMONS. (*sing*)
We are the Twelve Temptations to evil;
The sin-begotten demons of the Devil!
We roam about, and where walls are thin,
Outside a mortal's soul, we enter in;
And soon become a part of him.

Only twelve temptations: in number a few,
But embracing all sins that mortals do.
SPIRITS, are sunlight! we are murky night:
They fill a soul with joy! we with blight.
Most men for us forsake the RIGHT!

And unless some wizard, as in olden time,
With exorcising, drives us into swine,
We and our offspring ever help our Sire,
To consign new victims to eternal fire!
Our Daddy makes them all perspire.
(*They dance, after which they group.*)

3RD DEMON.
Do you know why Christ drove our offspring
Into the swine?

ALL DEMONS.
No, no,—why?

3RD DEMON.
So that they
Might be drowned, when swine ran in the sea.
Ha, ha, when they were drowned, the idiot,
From whom they were driven felt a torment,
Like the removing of a cancer!

ALL DEMONS.
How is that?

3RD DEMON.
Why, demons become practically identified,
With all who are fools enough to admit us:
So that if they at times muster up spunk
And drive us out; it is like losing part
Of themselves; and with a little cajoling,
They take us back again. Even our enemies,
Realize our power; hear this from Bible.
(*Takes a Bible from pocket and reads*)
"When the unclean spirit—

4TH DEMON.
UNCLEAN spirit!
Ah the enemy realizes our depravity, too.

3RD DEMON.
"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man,
he walketh through dry places, seeking rest;—

5TH DEMON.
Seeking rest; There is no rest for the wicked.

ALL DEMONS.
We know that to our sorrow.

3RD DEMON.
Don't interpolate.
Now to resume: "and finding none, he saith,
I will return unto my house whence I came out.
And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and
garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him
several other spirits as wicked as himself: and
they enter in, and dwell there: and the last
state of that man is worse than the first."

6TH DEMON.
You are as studious as Doctor Faust was!
The rest of us know little of psychology;
But we know that man is dual in nature:
The—material; and the—spiritual: and
That us demons enter into the spiritual,
Which is everlasting, and corrupt it.

7TH DEMON.
Ah, here come the Celestials! As they seem
To be on a search, the two loon patients
That we made up to, must have tattled.
Come now, let us get out of the Paradise,
As dextrously as we got in!
(*Exeunt* 12 *Temptations, left*)
Re-enter Everybody, right.

1ST ELDER.
Well, our search for the demons was fruitless!
It is their custom to flee, after speaking
To patients; and they have likely done so.

1ST MATRON
Beloved, now let us bring our festivities,
To a harmonious close, by the rendering
Of the balance of our musical Programme.
(*The clouds in Sky, now pass entirely away, and it is fluxed with golden splendor, in which are many Angelic Forms; and dazzling rays of light flood the stage. The scenic artist can get his inspiration for this effect, from passage of Scripture: "I saw the heavens open, and the spirit of God descending like a dove."*

2ND ELDER. (to EDMUND)
See, the clouds have passed from the skies,
And now we have a perfectly clear day:
Is it not beautiful?

EDMUND.
Wondrously beautiful!
I never saw the heavens look like that!

2ND MATRON.
Of course not: they are internal beauties,
Not visible to mortal sight: now that you
Are an immortal, you are able to see them.
(*Having lined up, they sing an Operatic Selection, accompanied by the orchestra. In response to an encore from audience they sing the Hymn "Love Divine, All Love Excelling."*) (Curtain.)

ACT IV.

SCENE.—*The Parlor of the Waller Mansion at Auburn, N. Y. (The same as Act II). The furnishings are grand, including a statue of Venus at right-front, and a sofa at left-front: at rear are a few steps leading up to a narrow paltform, running fully across, which leads to a supposed ballroom on right, and a supposed banquet hall on left. A door at right and a door at left of parlor.*

Enter SHIPMAN *and* JAQUES, *door at left.*

SHIPMAN.
Jaques, how strange are the mutations of life!
Six months ago we were in this same parlor,
Attending Edmund and Belinda's tin-wedding;
Now we are here to see her wedded to Philip.

JAQUES.
Forgive me Judge, (Belinda being your child,)
But methinks that, in words of the bard,
"The funeral baked meats, will (warmed)
Nicely furnish forth the marriage table."

SHIPMAN.
Indeed her union to Philip, comes close
Upon dear Edmund's death: I remonstrated,
But to no purpose whatever: except that
She agreed to forgo Church wedding. Egad,
She always has pretty much her own way:
But nevertheless she is a darling girl!

JAQUES.
So Edmund has been dead six months, eh?—
You remember the discussion that we had,
On the night of his death; whether or no,
Marriage existed in heaven?

SHIPMAN.
Very distinctly!

JAQUES.
Well, I would remark, (but not irreverently)
That Edmund knows all about it by now.

SHIPMAN.
Yes he does: unless, (I too speak soberly)
He has gone to the other place.

JAQUES.
Ha, ha, ha!
Really Judge that speech provoked levity.

SHIPMAN.
Do you not think that Philip was to blame,
For Edmund's death?

JAQUES.
Yes indeed, morally so:
In that his death resulted from his vices.

SHIPMAN.
That is just the way I look at it:
And it amazes me that dear Belinda, who
Undoubtedly loved her husband dearly,
Could from her mind the spectre banish,
And give her heart to Philip.

JAQUES.
The distemper,
That people dignify by the name of love,
Is sure to break out in fitful excesses.

SHIPMAN.
Now, let us take our stand in the ballroom;
Where the guests are assembled to await
The ceremony. (*Exeunt door at right*)
Edmund (still in Spirit form) enters thru rear open window onto platform and descends steps.

EDMUND.
Here I am again! A Spirit among mortals!
That trip is what I call rapid transit!
A few seconds ago, (it seems no longer,)
Sitting sadly alone in Pleasure Park,
In Paradise of the Hyperboreans, suddenly
I yield myself to some invisible power,
(Probably evoked by grief,) which lifting
Me high in the sky, I at once bestride
A swiftly pacing cloud, and sail along
On the bosom of the air, till it dissolving
In sunshine, I drop quickly through space,
Like a feather plummet, into this mansion,
Where my fondest hopes are centred!—Here,
Is the very sofa from which my spirit fled:
But that journey was taken with timidity;
On this return trip I amazedly drank in,
The sublimity of my surroundings! for one
Having grown accustomed to dizzy heights,
Resumes his wonted joy in observation.—
O what a heavenly place that Paradise was!
The toiling, sinsick masses of this world,
Would welcome such a refuge from their woes!
I should have been blissfully happy there,
Had not my soul been tainted by sexual love.
I could maybe have awaited Belinda in heaven:
But if Hyperboreans are right; the Parson,
Was right too; and there is no marriage there;
And such a contingency I dare not contemplate!
I am here!—Yet, as I am further from heaven,
I may perchance be nearer hell. No matter,—
A man is utterly reckless of consequences,
When he is the slave of passions.
Ah, somebody is entering here: I will hide
Behind the statue of Venus.
(*He hides, and becomes an involuntary listener to colloguy that follows; manifesting dismay by looks and acts.*)
Enter REGINALD *and* VIRGINIA, *door at right.*

REGINALD.
My darling Virginia, our nuptual day,
Draws slowly on! Four weary weary months,
Ere I can call you my own!

VIRGINIA.
Dear Reginald!
Would you have it sooner?

REGINALD.
Of course I would!

VIRGINIA.
And so would I, (although widow weeds are
Becoming to me,) but dare not defy gossip:
My lamented Homer died but five months ago;
(One month after Edmund was killed here).

REGINALD.
Your *lamented* Homer,—then you love him yet!

VIRGINIA.
You foolish boy! Don't you know there are
Certain customary terms, that one must use
When speaking of the departed.

REGINALD.
But Virginia,
Homer and you were known to be paragons,
Of true love, devotion and constancy: you
Must have loved him.

VIRGINIA.
I thought that I did
Until—until I met you! (*They embrace*)

EDMUND. (*aside*)
My God! that's enough to shake one's faith,
In human love! Homer whom she professed
To worship is dead, and she is engaged
To be married again!
PASTOR *crosses the platform from left to right.*

REGINALD.
There goes the Pastor who is to officiate.

VIRGINIA.
Horrid man, I don't like him one bit!

REGINALD.
Why not?

VIRGINIA.
Last Sunday night, after the Church service,
I asked him if widows were not deserving
Of especial consideration. Looking me
All over, and as he did so, evincing
Startled surprise at the stunning costume
That I wore, he replied: Please don't fail
To read the fifth chapter of first epistle
To Timothy,—it will do you much good.

REGINALD.
Well, did you read it?

VIRGINIA.
Yes, that same night:
And it made me so mad that I almost cried!
Ah, come to think I jotted down the worst,
Expressly to show it to you: here it is.

REGINALD. (*reads*)
Honor widows that are widows indeed. Now she that IS a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth. Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man. But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry.—Ha, ha, ha!

VIRGINIA.
It is not funny: why do you break out
In uproarious laughter? It's real mean of you.

REGINALD.
Oh, it hits widows off so deucedly correct!

VIRGINIA. (*sadly*)
So you join with the others to condemn widows;
And I am one: O dear!

REGINALD.
But you won't be long,
My dear! You will soon be my darling wife!
(*They embrace*)

VIRGINIA.
Yes dear Reggie, you will be another Paul,
And I will be your Virginia!

REGINALD.
Come now, let us rejoin guests in ballroom.
(*Exeunt door at right*)

EDMUND.
What a wicked fickle woman! Homer and she,
Were looked upon as models of fidelity;
In her case the attribute was undeserved.
Hamlet, said, "Frailty,thy name is woman:"
But 'tis thought he was of unsound mind.
Thank heaven! my wife, my dear Belinda,
Could never find it in her faithful heart,
To do a thing like that!—Ah, there she is!
(*Enter* BELINDA, *left*: EDMUND *hides again*)
Why, she is arrayed in bridal costume,—
What strange whim made her wear it to-day?
She must have had an inspired premonition,
Of my return. O how lovely she looks!
(BELINDA *has now descended the steps.*)
At opportune time, I will reveal myself.

BELINDA.
Edmund is not here! Of course he is not,
How could he be; it is nothing else but
My morbid fancy, bred by guilty conscience.
Wasn't it marvelous! that just as my toilet
Was completed, a strange, uncanny feeling
Came over me, that dear Edmund having grown
Hopelessly disconsolate over our separation,
Had returned from the land beyond the morn,
And was waiting for me here in the parlor.
Supposing he was here; what could I say
To him, when in burning passionate words,
He upbraided me for my rank inconstancy?
How could I seek to palliate my conduct?

EDMUND. (*aside*)
Inconstancy eh? 'tis her great love for me,
Still alive in memory, that makes her soul
Supersensitive!

BELINDA.
Hah! all spirits are said to be invisible:
Maybe he is right here in this room anyhow!
That sounds foolish: but the beloved ones,
Whom we have long loved and lost awhile,
Often seem to be nearer to us than usual,
And maybe they are geographically nearer.—
Well, it is unwise to remain here longer:
I left my maids, on pretext, and doubtless
They wonder what became of me.

EDMUND.
Belinda!
(*He confronts her, but she can't see him*)
My darling! my wife! it is I, Edmund!
(*He embraces her, but she slips from it*)

BELINDA.
O how strange! it almost seemed as though
Edmund was speaking to me!

EDMUND.
Great heavens!
She can't see nor hear me!

BELINDA.
Then as though
He were embracing me! And it felt like
Being enfolded in delicious sunshine!

EDMUND.
O horrors! just what they told us at Paradise;
That Spiritual forms were just as intangible,
As the sunshine. I placed little credence
In it then; but now it is proven truthful:
And the realization is driving me mad!
My love can feel me, only as one feels
The change in temperature: a delightful
Prospect truly for a passionate husband:—
So ring out the knell to all my happiness!
(*She had ascended steps and stopped to listen*)

BELINDA.

The same tremulous vibration of the air,
Not quite as inaudible as before, and
Sounding like dear Edmund's voice: I believe
That he is here!

EDMUND.

I am here my own darling!
Can't you hear me distinctly? (*He ascends steps and embraces her*) Can't you feel me?
(*He confronts her*) Can't you hear me dear?
Try to do so Belinda: O try your very best:
For on the outcome, hangs—everything!

BELINDA.

(*Gazing round with vacant look*) O Edmund!
If you are here, it is only in the Spirit.
Or else my nervous fancy imagines you
To be present, when you are not.
(*She exits, left; he gazes after her*)

EDMUND.

What sorrow is like unto my sorrow,—
To be the husband of beautiful Belinda,
And be impotent!—The Seraphim said,
That merely human organism and mentality,
Must forever pass away into the divine:
That is the way I should be: and I am,
Excepting this wild desire to continue
The married relation forever. O that man,
Will make such idols of earthly passions,
(Which even purifying death can't destroy,)
As to have the future life poisoned thereby!—
Now, to wait for darlings Flora and Fred!
I had anticipated so much joy from this:
But now I know the best I can hope for,
Is only a look at them. Then I will go,—
For as I am nothing now but sunshine,
It is just as impossible for me to stay
Here permanently, as it is for sunshine:
And were it possible for both, it would be
Alike impracticable. (*He descends steps*)

Enter FRED *and* FLORA, *door at left.*

FRED.

Flora, why don't Papa come back?

FLORA.

Now Fred,
You know that Mama told you long ago.
That dear Papa was dead.

FRED.

Yes, but the dead,
Come back sometimes, don't they?

FLORA.

In stories,
But not in real life.
(*While* FRED *ruminates over* FLORA'S *answer,* EDMUND *takes a place between them as they sit on sofa apart, puts an arm around each and caresses them.*)

EDMUND.

Belinda, couldn't see, hear nor feel me,
Neither can my children: I wonder then
How it is I can see, hear and feel them?
Ah, I have it! As anyone grows purer
The imperfect becomes clearer: as anyone
Grows less pure, the perfect fades away.

FRED.

(*Waking from reverie*)
Listen to this, Flora:
I told dear Papa that if he didn't return,
We should come to him; and he said that we
Should—sometime.

FLORA.

Dear Papa, meant that
We should meet him in heaven when we died.

FRED.

Ah, that must have been it.

FLORA.

Now, you know,
We are going to have a new Papa.
(*Edmund is startled*)

FRED.

Yes, to-day:
And perhaps after all it is lucky dear Papa
Can't come back: it might make him unhappy.

FLORA.

Of course it would.

FRED.

But which one of them,
Will dear Mama love in heaven?

FLORA.

Which one,—
Why both of them, of course: for no one
Can go there unless they love everybody!

FRED.

But they would be jealous of each other.—
Sometimes Papa used to be angry with Mama,
When he saw her speaking with other men:
A boy friend told me it must be jealousy.

FLORA.

Well, they can't get jealous up in heaven:
It's an entirely different kind of love!
Let's go,—we were told not to loiter long
Here in the parlor. (*Exeunt door at right*)

EDMUND.

My darling children!
O my love for them is indeed holy love!
A kind that would find a freer scope,
In the better land! But can I get there?
Or must I be forever parted from them?
I am far from fit now; for when Flora,
Just now spoke of having a new Papa,
It shocked me badly; and my soul surged
In impious rebellion! But on reflection,
I concluded it was only a childish term,
Applied to some new-found friend.—Still,
I feel I am fitter now than when I came:
Much good has come even out of agony:
The canker that festers in my system,
Has been perceptibly unloosed: O that
Some worse blow, even than my experience
With Belinda just now, might come soon,
To tear it out by the roots!—
Whither, O whither, shall I go now!

Enter PASTOR, FRED, FLORA, SHIPMAN, JAQUES, REGINALD & VIRGINIA, MRS. GOSSIP, GRANDPA SHIPMAN, MR. & MRS. MALLORY, MR. & MRS. TAPPEN, MR. & MRS. HARRIS, MR. & MRS. OGLE, MR. & MRS. GADABOUT, MR. & MRS. PEKOK, MR. & MRS. FIRESTONE, ARTHUR, WALTER, HUBERT, MRS. SHEPARD, *and other Guests from youth to age, and Musicians, door at right.*

EDMUND.

Why, here come invited Guests in numbers!
And among them many of my acquaintances.
(*He hides again*)
Although I just received ample proof,
Of being invisible to mortals, I again
Run to cover; for it takes time for one
To grow accustomed to new developments.
(*The Guests form columns on either side, the Pastor stands on steps, then Musicians play a Wedding March, and enter by door at left Belinda and Philip, followed by Bridesmaid and Groomsman, who all take places before the Pastor, who proceeds with marriage ceremony.*)

EDMUND.

Look there! —Comfort me Angelic powers!—
Belinda—and Philip, walking arm in arm!
Now they take stands before the Pastor!
O God what does it mean!

PASTOR.

(*Reading the Services from a Manual*)
Dearly beloved! We are assembled here in the presence of God, to join this Man and this Woman in holy Marriage.

EDMUND.

O horror of horrors! My Belinda is going
To wed Philip! Hold up, Pastor, hold up;
For God's sake! (*Faints middle of stage*)

PASTOR.

(*To Guests*), Forasmuch as these two Persons have come hither to be made one in this holy estate, if there be any here present who knows any just cause why they may not lawfully be joined in Marriage, I require him now to make it known, or ever after to hold his peace.—

(*To* PHILIP *and* BELINDA). I charge you both, before the great God, the searcher of all hearts, that if either of you know any impediment, why ye may not lawfully be joined together in Marriage, ye do now confess it.—

Let us pray.—Almighty and ever blessed God, whose Presence is the happiness of every condition, and whose favor sweetens every relation, we beseech Thee to be present and favorable unto these Thy servants, that they may be truly joined in the honorable estate of Marriage, in the covenant of their God. Amen.—

Philip.—wilt thou have this Woman to be thy wife, and wilt thou pledge thy troth to her, in all love and honour, in all duty and service, in all faith and tenderness, to live with her, and cherish her, according to the ordinance of God, in the holy bond of Marriage?

PHILIP.

I will.

PASTOR.

Belinda.—wilt thou have this Man to be thy husband, and wilt thou pledge thy troth to him, in all love and honour, in all duty and service, in all faith and tenderness, to live with him, and cherish him, according to the ordinance of God, in the holy bond of Marriage?

EDMUND.

(*Coming to, but remaining down*) Belinda,
My wife—my love—O do not promise that!
Remember your promise to me on deathbed!

BELINDA.

(*Agitated, as if invisible* EDMUND'S *appeal had almost been heard, answers* PASTOR.)
I will.

EDMUND.

Alas! she forsakes me for Philip!—
Yet, her agitation showed that my appeal,
Although unheard, had some subtle effect
On her!—and well it might: for it was so
Surcharged with agony, that a thing denser
Than a mortal would have been penetrated;
Yea, even a stone!
(*From now on to the end* EDMUND, *prostrate but uplifted head and fixed protesting finger, glares at ceremony with agonized looks*)

PASTOR.

Now please clasp together your right hands.
(*They do so*)

PASTOR. (*Philip repeating*)

I, Philip, take thee Belinda, To be my wedded wife; And I do promise and covenant, before God and these witnesses, To be thy loving and faithful husband, In plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, In sickness and in health, As long as we both shall live.

PASTOR. (*Belinda repeating*)

I, Belinda, take thee Philip, To be my wedded husband; And I do promise and covenant, before God and these witnesses, To be thy loving and faithful wife, In plenty and in want, In joy and in sorrow, In sickness and in health, As long as we both shall live.

PASTOR. (*Philip repeating*)

This Ring I give thee, In token and pledge, of our constant faith, and abiding love. (*He gets ring from* PASTOR *and puts it on her finger*)

PASTOR.

Let us pray.—Most merciful and gracious God, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named; Bestow upon these Thy servants the seal of Thine approval, and Thy fatherly benediction; granting unto them grace to fulfill, with pure and steadfast affection, the vow and covenant between them made. Guide them together, we beseech Thee, in the way of righteousness and peace, that loving and serving Thee, with one heart and mind, all the days of their life, they may be abundantly enriched with the tokens of Thine everlasting favour, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.—

(*To the Guests*). By the authority committed unto me as a Minister of the Church of Christ, I declare that Philip and Belinda are now Husband

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and Wife, according to the ordinance of God, and the law of the State; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.—
(*They join hands again*). Whom therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.—
The Lord bless you and keep you: The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you: The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace: Both now and in the life everlasting. Amen.
(*Pastor congratulates newly wedded pair, then "to music" they ascend steps and exeunt right*)

EDMUND.

(*Having just succeeded in partly rising*)
There goes my Belinda! another man's wife!
There goes—everything!! (*Falls in faint*)

SHIPMAN.

The Bride and Groom, in order to avoid
A throng of sight-seers, now gathered
At front of mansion, are leaving by way
Of ballroom private exit; where an auto
Is waiting to convey them to steamer,
On which they sail for honeymoon abroad.—
Now, we will repair to the banquet hall,
And partake of the wedding feast.

REGINALD.

And,
As we drink our draughts of champagne down,
Toast the Bride and Groom, to long life
Continued health and plenteous happiness!

EVERYBODY.

We'll toast them that with all our hearts!
(*Guests "to music" ascend steps, exeunt left*)
(*Edmund by great effort rises to fect*)

EDMUND.

When in utter despair, I cried out then—
There goes everything,—I should have added—
Everything that is mortal! For the mortal,
(That part of it which still clung to me,)
By this agonizing ordeal, was wrenched
From my system, branches roots and all.
And O God! although weak yet, I now begin
To feel the divine effluvia, rushing in
Like a torrent to fill the vacuum!—
There was a woman and her name was Belinda,
And she had Edmund and Philip for husbands:—
The query arises, WHOSE WIFE shall she be
In the resurrection? My newborn faith says,
(The same as Jesus answered the Sadducees,)
She won't be anybody's wife: for in heaven,
They neither marry nor are given in marriage;
But we all are as the Angels:—Philip and I,
Will both love her! and love each other too!
For Romeo said that love divine surmounts
All obstacles! (*He meditates, then says*)
O I long for heaven!

ANGEL.

I will take you there!
(*Angel appears from out a haze of light*)

EDMUND.

What's this that dawns here on my sight?
An Angel!—in a flood of golden light!

SATAN.

Though, doors be strong and locks be stout,
They can not keep the devil out!
(*Satan appears from out a haze of vapor*)

ANGEL.

So you have come to see Edmund too. Well,—
What do you want?

SATAN.

I humbly beg your pardon;
I thought he might prefer to go to hell!—
We have no golden street or celestial wine;
But our pavement and whiskey are as fine!
We have no radiators with steamed heat;
But I think our warming is just as neat!

ANGEL.

No, No, Edmund has lost his liking for thee!—
You infest the world, to teach men to abuse,
The Almighty's blessings, not their right use:
Your subjects are ever burning in the fires,
Of sin-contracted unquenchable desires!

SATAN.

I see thy mind is with false error tainted,
For I am not near as black as I am painted.

ANGEL.

But we only have your own word for that.

SATAN.

If Edmund had been left at the Paradise,
I might have had a ghost of a chance:
For my agents have had a few from there.
Why did the Almighty send him back here?

ANGEL.

Do not ask me—why. Rather ask me—why,
He allows you to exist! The Almighty's ways
Are inscrutable!

SATAN.

I have always found them so!—
Well, as I do not seem to be welcome here;
I will say, farewell! and then—disappear!
(SATAN *vanishes in a haze of vapor*)

ANGEL.

I am very glad that we are rid of Satan!—
Now—a word about the ways of God to man:—
He who moves the spheres with perfect ease;
Works out man's destiny by ascending degrees:
First earth, then heaven: then both pass away
To be replaced by new, (so our prophets say.)
Know then O Spirit that God's ways are just!
Man's sole prerogative is faith and trust.

EDMUND.

Henceforward, God's will, not mine, be done!

ANGEL.

Now take a last farewell to those you love!

EDMUND.

Good-bye Belinda! Good-bye Flora and Fred!
Good-bye my darlings; until we meet above;
Where dear mothers and fathers are spared
The pangs—of nurturing beloved children,
(Who entwine themselves round heartstrings,)
And losing them by marriage!
(ANGEL & EDMUND *vanish in a haze of light*)